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ABSTRACT

This book recounts the struggles and successes of one Seattle School District secondary school composition teacher guiding special education students through the writing process. The nine students had an IQ range of 59 to 109 and had an age range of 14 to 17 years. Of the students assigned to this class: one was neurologically impaired; one was mentally retarded; two were emotionally disturbed; and five were language and learning disabled. Included are writing samples of the students, sample assignment sheets, descriptions of classroom activities, and an explanation of the methodology used in guiding the students through the process. (HOD)

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Writing Teachers at Work

Special Education Students Write

Classroom Activities and Assignments

by Ray Marik

illustrations by Scott Randall

National Writing Project
University of California, Berkeley

CS 208 683

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Preface

The completed manuscript of Ray Marik's book arrived at my office on a Friday afternoon, and I sighed as I remembered my promise to write a preface immediately. That was before I began reading. Once I turned to the first page, I couldn't stop because I wanted to know more about Becky, Ron, Judy, Len, Cathy, Gail, and Jim and how they learned to write. These students are the ones Mina Shaughnessy calls the "true outsiders" of schools. They have been in schools, yes, but school activities have had little meaning for them, and much of what they have learned has been negative. What Ray chronicles is how his "small but significant miracles" help some of these outsiders find success in school.

The National Writing Project has sometimes been accused of elitism. The accusers claim that the best teachers are selected, and they, in turn, teach the most able students. In in-service courses teachers have said, "Yes, these writing processes are fine for good students, but what about the other students?" In this book Ray Marik demonstrates that the work of the National Writing Project can benefit all students, even those in special education. As Ray suggests, writing can unlock treasures of eloquence in students who have been silent for years. I invite you to discover how.

Anne Ruggles Gere, *Director*
Puget Sound Writing Program
English Department,
University of Washington

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For discipline: Joan Dore, my editorial conscience.

A special thanks to Bev Marcoux, my guardian angel (and savior of whatever sanity I may have left), and to the great special education students of Ingraham High and their parents.

Contents

Preface ..... *iii*

I. First House 1

II. Methodology: Considerations in Teaching the Writing Process 19

III. An Autumn Walk 30

IV. The Goat Farm 64

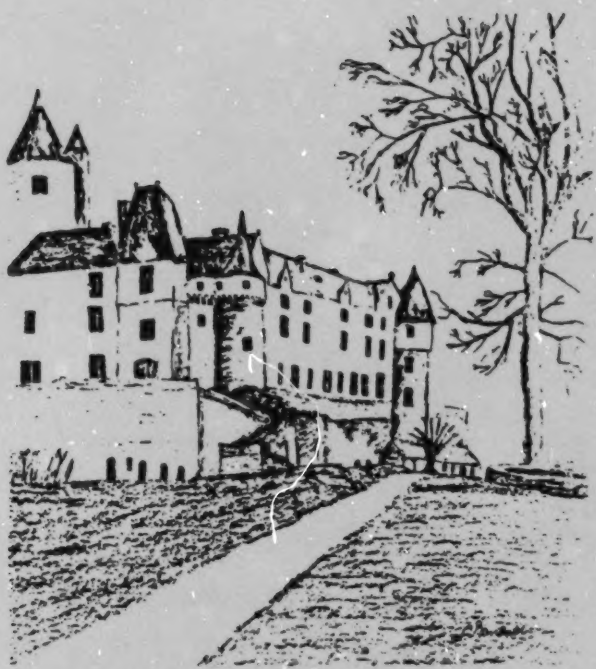
V. Picture a Story 90

VI. Silent Rage 129

Resources 141

I have seen how the belabored man is belabored—
thou shouldst set thy heart in pursuit of writing.
And I have observed how one may be rescued from
his duties—behold, there is nothing which surpasses
writing....

—Egyptian text, 2000 BC



I

First House

"Those son-of-a-bitches ain't going to kick these kids around!"

Ed Caldwell, a burly, unshaven brute of six two, 240 pounds, entered my special education classroom at Ingraham High School. His baggy wool pants, spotted with battery acid holes, hung down in frayed edges, accordian-like over the tops of heavy, black rubber boots. He identified himself as the father of Becky, and a "fighter for these special education kids." He began a disjointed monologue about his fights with the Seattle School District, the superintendent, and the special education department, while pacing back and forth in a ten foot area just inside the classroom door. His eyes glared angrily around the room, darting from his daughter to me, back to his daughter, around the room, and back to me again.

I was stunned to see this almost Mephistophelean hulk materialize during my first period composition class, incongruously and inexplicably ranting dark threats about anyone who would abuse these kids. I could not follow the exploding monologue but felt myself being drawn ever closer into the vortex of his inner rage. He spun around and lashed another barrage in my direction to the effect that if I somehow faltered with their education, I would pay dearly for any mistake. The animal side of human nature was savagely near the surface, and I had to make a decision. I had taken a seat behind my desk in an effort to get him also to sit down, but this strategy had failed. The situation was getting worse. The students, immobilized by the dangerous drama, sat silently in protective fear.

I quickly stood up behind the desk, and with his next outburst of profanity, confronted him head on, paused, then moved to one side and opened the classroom door. I told him as loudly and authoritatively as I

could that he would have to leave because that kind of language was not permitted in the classroom in front of the students. He started to talk again. I cut him off, insisting he leave. We stood there, not three feet apart, his breath foul with the stench of garlic, tobacco, and booze. He raised his huge fist, pointed a black, dirt-impacted fingernail down at my nose, and began to snarl a response through yellowed teeth. I looked right into his eyes as hard as stupid bravado could fake it. For five very long seconds we stood there. Slowly he dropped his fist, the downward movement of his fingernail moving like a scalpel bisecting a cadaver. He backed into the hall, his bloodshot eyes narrowing menacingly. I carefully closed the door, stepped back, froze, and waited. I braced myself, for I expected him to come crashing headlong through the door, ripping the hinges from the casing. Seconds passed: he on one side, I on the other. A minute later I cautiously opened the door. The hall was clear. It was over.

I contacted the principal, a restraining order was issued against Caldwell to prevent him from entering the building again, and the problem was ended, or so I thought. This encounter in the third week of school would prove to be child's play in relation to what followed later. He would have a disastrous effect on some of my composition students. After the classroom incident, I learned how perilously close to harm I had come. He was known to carry a loaded pistol under that greasy windbreaker.

Nine students are enrolled in first period special education language arts (composition) class. From their files I know that the class I.Q. range is from fifty-nine to one hundred nine; one student is neurologically impaired, one mentally retarded, two emotionally disturbed, five language and learning disabled (LLD). There are four sophomores, five juniors, five girls, four boys, and ages range from fourteen to seventeen. Special education classes have been "functionally grouped" under the special education department's latest plan, so that in theory my students' reading levels should be fairly close together and they should be able to function as a group—at least academically. Unfortunately, because of scheduling problems with another plan, "mainstreaming," the reading grade level is actually from second to seventh grade level; spelling from second to eighth. They are enrolled in Ingraham High, a school with a reputation for high academic excellence.

I take attendance, explain school policies, classroom behavior expectations, and the course requirements. When I note that we will be doing much writing this semester, one student loudly sneers, "I hate

writing!" Judy Brentwood, a tall, slim girl, is sprawled in a desk-top chair, one leg propped on the lower rung of a seat ahead of her, the other spread wide-crotched into the aisle. Her hands are shoved deeply into the pockets of a large maroon jacket. She snaps her head in a defiant semicircle, swinging straight brown shoulder-length hair out of her face, and ending with a muscle-hard set in a protruding jaw. Her two cold steel-blue eyes are leveled at me like the twin ends of a double-barrelled shotgun. I hear two others say, "Me too!"

The class apparently has no difficulty with Macrorie or Elbow's concern about expressing truth or finding their own center of gravity. The range of honest emotions is from outright hostility to passive resistance. It is their way of telling me the summer vacation is over and if I think just because I'm a teacher that should mean something, forget it. They dig in, knowing the enemy well. I pause and wonder if I should give it all up right now and get a job at the Boeing Company delivering mail to various departments by pushing a little grocery shopping cart up and down the aisles.

How to begin? Where to begin? Stephen Dunning (University of Michigan), presented this technique in our Puget Sound Writing Project course last summer, and I begin the first assignment:

> Think back to the *first* house you can remember living in. Go way, way back to that first house and draw a floor plan of the rooms you can remember. If that doesn't work for you, draw a picture of what you saw as you looked out the doorway or window at your immediate neighborhood.

Becky Caldwell is the first to respond. "I can't remember the first house I lived in!" Becky, a moderately attractive girl of medium height and build, had curiously viewed my confrontation with her father with detached disinterest, showing neither fear, excitement, nor embarrassment. She may not have comprehended the inappropriateness of her father's actions in a classroom setting but instead simply saw her father accosting another man as he might have done many times on the street or elsewhere.

I repeat, "Listen to the assignment again. Draw a floor plan of the first house you can *remember* living in. It does not have to be the first house you lived in." Becky persists. "Well, I can't remember!"

Cathy Hansen now says, "This is dumb! What do we have to do this for!" These girls, Judy, Becky, and Cathy, by prior agreement have formed an iron triangle of mutual resistance. It is at this precise, easily overlooked moment that the year will be won or lost. Usually this critical point comes during the end of the first or beginning of the second week of instruction. The issue is always the same: who will prevail in the

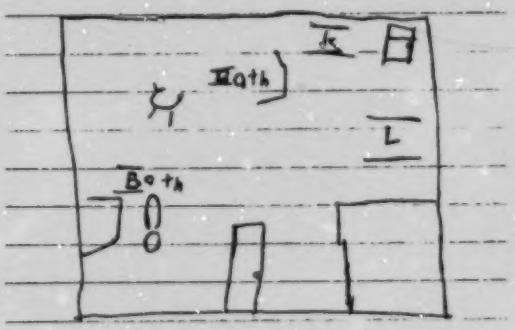
classroom? If the students can get the teacher on the defensive explaining *why* something must be done, how long he has been a teacher, whether he is married, etc., the battle is lost. Anticipating that the gauntlet will be flung down at some point, recognizing when it happens, and knowing what to do about it are observations, decisions, and actions crucial to the success of all special education instruction. I simply press on, undeterred, and say, "Because I said so. This is the assignment and I want you to at least try." The room quickly becomes quiet. They watch me closely. I wait.

Cathy finally breaks the silence. "Well, OK, but this is still dumb!" I busy myself with some paper work at a table in front of the room, then circulate and soon realize that Len, Don, and Paul do not know how to draw a floor plan and are drawing the front part of a house with doors, windows, chimney, and roof. I pause at a sketch drawn by Gail.

Gail, a friendly, heart-of-gold type, dark hair, round face, is heavy set, strongly and solidly built. She has two infamous qualities. Once started, she talks non-stop, reacting to any comment or observation in the room with an endless battering of trivia. Even on this first day I have to remind her to stop talking. Later in the semester, after repeated reminders to stop talking, I would have to bellow, "Gail, please *shut up*!" The class would thank me and we'd settle down to do our writing. In the meantime, Gail would stop what little work she was doing, and sit there very hurt and offended that I had yelled at her. Is there no justice?

Far worse than the habit of non-stop talking is the strength of her voice. It could easily crack plaster at fifty yards. In her other life, if she had hooked up with Joshua outside the walls of Jericho, he would not have needed a horn.

Gail's floor plan shows evidence of massive spatial confusion:

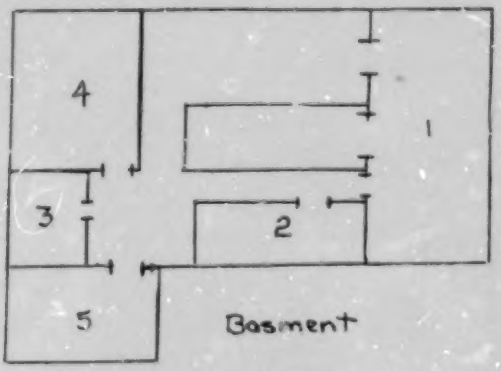


The flat interior floor plan is confused with the exterior front door. Here is shown a bit of both the vertical and horizontal planes, with a strong

suggestion of a visual-perceptual problem in not closing obviously square or rectangular forms. This disability will also manifest itself in writing with irregular margins, writing above and below the lines, and misforming many letters such as failing to close the letter "a" resulting in the letter "u", or closing the letter "a" but failing to bring the loop down so that it looks more like an "o" than an "a". All these visual-perceptual mistakes appear as spelling errors on an essay. The usual approach of heavy drill in spelling lists of words is not likely to help further misspellings in these and other words. Specialized error-analysis-based lessons (see pp. 98-110), are helpful.

To help her and others get started, I draw a standard two bedroom floor plan on the front board, showing bedrooms, kitchen, living area, and bathroom. Len and Don wad their papers into a ball and fire them in the general direction of the wastebasket. They are reminded not to do this. I am off to a miserable start. Do I really want to inflict this much pain on myself? I am a product of the "Golden Arches" syndrome. I want to deliver instant service to satisfy an acknowledged need, like a MacDonald's soft, juicy burger, hot from the griddle. At the end of each semester, I want to see myself, basking benignly under the warm glow of the golden arches, a ditto smudge on the forehead, clutching a bulging folder of marvelous essays as a computer clicks the latest count, "24,576 Satisfied Composition Customers."

The next day I distribute rulers, but most floor plans are drawn free-hand and only roughly approximate the example on the board. Jim draws one of the best floor plans:



He is a blond-haired, shy, industrious worker who shows a bit of drafting talent. His papers are always neatly laid out, and although he has difficulty with spelling and producing enough words for a decent-length essay, the handwriting is legible. Jim is neither popular nor unpopular,

seldom volunteers a comment or asks a question, but pays attention and tries to do what he can. He has one great desire—to be invisible—and for the most part he succeeds. Jim belongs to that small cluster of students in every school whose names and faces, even after ninety days of regular class attendance with six different teachers, few can place. Physically he is not tall, not short, not fat, not skinny, and he does not distinguish himself either academically or socially. He is just a real nice kid whose presence is rendered nearly non-existent by the boisterous trouble makers, social butterflies, and academic hot dogs who dominate the dramatics of the classroom stage.

The classroom atmosphere is somewhat improved. I give the next assignment:

> Now try to recall one thing you can remember happening in a specific part of the house. It could be a special occasion such as Christmas, Easter, your birthday, an argument with your sister or brother; the loss of a favorite toy or pet; a visit by a relative, and so on.
>
> Place a #1 on the floor plan where this happened. Now try to recall four other memories and number them #2, 3, 4, 5, on the floor plan.

Cathy again seeks a confrontation. "Why do we have to do this? I can't remember nuthin!" Although it is simply not productive to play the "Why do we have to do this?" game, I give in a little and matter-of-factly explain that the structure is being built for the concept of a plan (outline) which they may or may not find helpful in organizing their future writing efforts.

Cathy, chubby, long brown hair, dark, wide-set eyes, high cheekbones, full lips, has most of the classical features that in adulthood shape themselves into an attractive face. The rest of her is in need of a diet, which she struggles to enforce throughout the year under extremely traumatic conditions which will be explained later.

She also has two unusual characteristics. Cathy's voice is generally soft and sweet; her manners kind and gentle. However, when she becomes angry, this facade shatters as quickly as fine porcelain. "I'll kick her fuckin' ass!" she would say when in conflict with another girl. I'd look up, catch her attention, she would start to apologize and explain the situation in the same breath. The sharp edges of her painful life sever the reins of self-control in times of stress. Throughout the year I never adjusted to this contradiction between what was sweetly presented physically and what exploded emotionally, but eventually I understood.

Cathy also closed doors. Between classes, while students would be coming into my classroom, I would occasionally be out in the hall.

During this five minute period, whenever I turned to go back into my classroom and the door was shut, I knew Cathy was inside. I asked her why she did this. She blushed, lowered her eyes, and softly said, "'Cause I don't want any of my (regular) friends to see that I'm in special ed." This strong desire not to be "branded" as a special education student spurred her disabled intellect to surmount many social and academic obstacles common to the high school experience.

Most of the class makes an attempt to recall events from their childhood, and negative comments are left to evaporate in the air. Instinctively I feel the core of resistance melting. I let the triangle of Judy, Becky, and Cathy silently observe they are on the outer fringes of class activity. Even for the antagonistic high school special education student, being out of step can be worse than the curse of the Pharaoh. Without further suggestions or prompting, they finish the assignment and are ready for the next phase.

I split them into groups of two and three to share their first remembrances. However, this sudden switch in which they must now carry the conversation embarrasses them and lacking well developed social skills, most clam up. This aspect of talking and sharing will not work—at least not yet. Perhaps the subject is too personal and I should have done some "community building" activities to get them better acquainted with each other. However, given the level of hostility evident on the first day, perhaps nothing would have worked very well. This situation will change dramatically later on. They are given the next assignment:

> Write about five experiences you can remember, starting with #1. Start like this: "I'm in the bathroom..." or, "In the living room I can remember...." As you develop your descriptions, include some people; this will give you an opportunity for dialogue (have your characters talking to each other in your descriptions).

They set to writing. Some cannot think of five events to write about. Ron asks, "How much do you want us to write?" "Write as much as you can remember."

A few start by writing on the same sheet their map was drawn on and thus may run out of space before they have written all they can remember. At that point they will simply stop writing rather than "waste" another sheet of paper. I remind them to "write this on a separate sheet of paper." I hear some groans. They start over and all complete the assignment. Ron's paper illustrates this phase of the writing assignment:

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the kitchen table. When I sit there I heard a crackling sound. I remember how sad it was because it was only three and it scared him out of me.

#2 This was in the back out of our house. It was snowing and I think it was cold. We had just come back from the supermarket and our neighbors dog "Queenie" was playing in the snow. We were walking up the driveway, [illegible] to stop to pet the dog and she push in the snow, she was enough that we got stuck. I caught a cold the next day and couldn't go out for a week.

#3 It was in the fall day and I was looking at our china cabinet and it don't know what came over me but I started pounding on the glass doors. Soon, I pounded them so much, the glass in the doors were totally cracked. When my parents found out, I got a whipping I'll never forget. I felt like I could never sit down again.

I am ready to introduce something about proper essay form, including headings, title, margins, paragraphing and so on. I cover this material now instead of earlier because they need to understand the idea that a piece of work is not finished in one effort, but needs to be "revised" (a new concept for them) before it is handed in. Later on "revision" will mean applying these conventions in addition to correcting spelling, handwriting (letter formation), and applying other skills as necessary. Also, I do not want to tamper with their first efforts too much, yet I want to get across the idea that every piece of written work will need some changes before it is ready in its final form. I display the "Composing Developmental Process" transparency (see Figure Two, p. 20) and discuss the stages of the writing process before going on. An overhead transparency is also used to demonstrate the standard paper headings for our school district (see sample).

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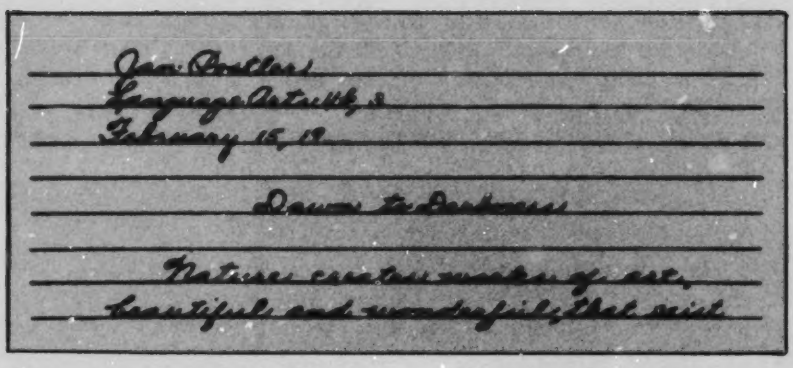

I circulate and insist on this minimal information. It is surprising how many high school special education students do not even know how to head a paper, but scrawl their first name somewhere on the paper, omit the date, class period, and title of their work. The busy teacher is then left to guess which "John" that might be, what assignment it was for (the paper may be turned in days late), and for what period of the day. Is this teaching composition? No. This is teaching whatever needs to be done in the basic skills/information area, so that the more important compositional processes can be explored down the line with an end product that appears to coincide with established school and district standards. It also becomes a ritual to get psychologically "set" to do classwork—to stop talking to friends, playing with the innards of a watch, digging through a purse, combing hair, and a dozen other timewasters when the clan gathers.

A proper heading is necessary for another reason. When a special education student is mainstreamed into a regular language arts class, the busy high school teacher does not have time to guess whose paper that might be. Farrell points out that the teacher

> with 150 students faces 25 hours of reading compositions each time he or she elects to spend 10 minutes per student evaluating papers. Most English teachers spend 25 hours a week in the classroom; make two or three preparations per day for classes; attend departmental meetings, and PTA meetings; and often supervise extracurricular activities. The added burden of responding frequently and carefully to students' writing thus seems truly awesome. ("Assessing Writing," p. 47)

In addition, many teachers not trained in teaching composition tend to be error-oriented. That is, the sequence of observation is to react to errors first, content last. The reverse should be true in that the importance of content should always triumph over mechanics. Regrettably this is not

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always the case, and I confess to the same impatience with errors when teaching regular classes and dealing with the paper load. When special education students can routinely organize and spatially place heading information in preparation for written work, correct misspellings, and attend to numerous other obvious mechanical errors in the revising/editing stage, their work will be that much closer to being judged for its content rather than its errors.

Mandel puts the issue very succinctly:

> I lost sight of your point of view because what I was seeing were the errors in spelling. If it's OK with you that your point of view goes down the drain, it's OK with me. I have my own point of view in life to tend to. If it's not all right with you, then in your next paper, do *whatever* you have to do in order to make your spelling invisible and thereby supportive of what you wish to communicate. This may be a pain in the ass. But it's also simple. ("The Writer Writing is Not at Home," p. 376)

This is the reality of errors which will forever plague the special education student in his attempts to have his writing graded for its content, not its mechanical errors. I have no magical cure for this problem, but recognize and respect this point of view, for it is part of mine also. However, I don't believe it should initially be a high priority in relation to learning the skills of the composing process.

Back to the First House sequence; further suggestions as they write:

> Place an "X" where some very important thing happened. It can be pleasant, embarrassing, or traumatic. Mark or tell about some important object, *i.e.* Teddy Bear, toy, blanket, etc.

After ten minutes:

> If you are running out of things to say, make up characters or *invent* dialogue.
>
> Shift to another time, day, month, or special time of the year.

And finally:

> Do one more formal move. Start with, "I'm sitting under the apple tree..., visiting grandma..., riding my tricycle or bicycle..., etc.

When they finish, I ask them to select a part they particularly like and share it with one member of the group. Again a few resist. I share my story of first house memories, including some embarrassing incidents. They laugh, the tension is eased, and all now cite some remembrances. However, they are shared with me, not members of their group. I am relieved, but under the facade of disciplined confidence and self-control, I have become desperate for some positive response. I'm working in an area where they have known little but frustration and pain. Old wounds

heal slowly. Most of the writing is fairly typical, describing innocuous little tid-bits from early childhood. Jim writes:

I rember Me and my friends used to make Comps on top of or uner a big table we had in that room and we used to use blankes for the roof or side of our Comps we made
I rember that my sister painted a neat design on the bathroom wall that was really neat

Ron notes:

This was just before we moved into our new house. We moved because the house was getting too small and rundown. I remember the moving men coming and getting all our stuff. I didn't feel very bad about moving because I didn't know anybody over there.

When we got to our new house, I thought we went back to Los Angles.

Ron has smooth, handsome features, dark hair, heavy eyebrows, medium height and build. He never smiles, laughs, or says much at first. My impressions are that he is very upset about something and is far more deadly serious than is necessary to complete classroom assignments. His skin is stretched taut over angry bones and although I can feel the dark surging within his body, nothing identifiable rises to the surface. I know this water runs deep.

Two other pieces emerge, both disturbing, one of which is included here:

1. *My mother and father had a fight in the living room and my father hit my mother in the arm and hit her in the face and my mother walked quickly to the kitchen.*
2. *My mother and father had a fight in the bathroom and my father pushed my mother in the bathtub and my father left. Then she came out and made dinner.*
3. *My father hit me and pull(ed) my hair because I did not make my*

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bed and my mother tr(ied) to stop him but he hit my mother and said, "Sh ut up," and (this) made me very angry.

4. *My father got beat up in the kitchen by a man who lived down the street because he said that he said something and he didn't so he hit my father and we had to take him to the hospital.*

What these two papers reveal in an open, candid, almost detached way, are incidents of violence from their early lives. This result proves to be difficult for me to handle for two reasons. First, there is always the chance that stirring up violent memories of the past will result in violent actions in the present. Perhaps this repressed anger may be released by aggression against parents, the teacher, other students in the school building or community. Second, how does the classroom teacher deal with correcting or improving pieces dealing with personal violence, trauma, or tragedy? Should the images of violence darkly hinted at be sharpened? Should more details be suggested and questions asked: "How do you feel about this? How do you think you felt about this at that time?" In the name of improving writing, are we justified in deepening the sense of tragedy in the already troubled adolescent mind in order to squeeze out the really good stuff? Perhaps turn these pieces into a "values clarification" session and slop around as amateur psychiatrists? Where does the responsibility of the composition teacher end, and respect for the individual involved begin? Once started on this track, how is the teacher to know where to stop before he has gone too far? I decide not to push it, and the door closes as quietly as it had opened.

Despite the risks with these pieces, it is now time to place this work in an essay format. I project a transparency, "Man's Greatest Victory." (Roberts and Andreach, see Figure One) This sample shows the introduction, body, and conclusion parts of a composition. Subsequent overlays and dittoes detail every step of the expository process. This is an excellent program for the more capable student in learning expository structure, but the total program does not hold the special education student's interest.

I briefly point out the introduction, thesis, paragraph topic sentences, and conclusion as a general (holistic) orientation to essay structure. I do not realize that the space between the three main sections, separated for emphasis, will cause most of them to skip a line between paragraphs. Why some remember that part of the visual which is not part of the lesson, and forget to indent, which *is* part of the lesson, reveals part of the inexplicable puzzle of the special education student mind. Generally, tight patterning or structuring of material is very effective in reducing the number of options which can be chosen in error. This lesson may be an example of providing too much material at once, although I place no emphasis on form mastery. Students are

not to stick to this form like flies to fly paper, just buzz by and have a good look at the general structure. Instead, most seem to crash about, and I am left trying to extricate my little band from one of teacher-kind's greatest defeats.

*Man's Greatest Victory**

Man has won victories over all of nature. He has conquered space, harnessed the atom and overcome the microbe. He can travel with the speed of sound, heat his home with solar energy and live to be a hundred. But man has failed to win the greatest victory of all, the victory over himself.

Man's record of hatred and destruction in our time illustrates his failure to conquer himself. Again and again man has gone to war. Men have bombed and tortured each other to death in two world wars and many local wars. Despite these horrors, man has not changed. Our daily newspapers tell a continuing story of murder, robbery and violence. Two hoodlums kill a newsboy for the fifty cents in his pocket. A holdup man beats an elderly storekeeper to death. From a highway overpass, teenagers drop rocks onto cars speeding below, endangering countless lives. Even children hate and destroy. Little Johnny throws a baseball bat at Harry because Harry has called him a dope. Mary pulls Judy's hair because she envies Judy's new dress. Betty dislikes Carol and whispers that Carol is stuck-up. Children and adults alike rage and hate and destroy.

Man, therefore has failed to win the only victory worth winning. He continues to murder and make war. Until he learns to overcome his destructive impulses and to live at peace with himself and others, all his victories over nature will remain meaningless. For man has yet to win his greatest victory, his victory over himself.

Figure One

In the end, all come through with an essay. John, a student from my other composition class, is as severe a dyslexic as Paul is in this class. However, unlike Paul, John has excellent attendance and despite his handicap, attempts to do every lesson. Thus he is able to complete this unit. I can now see that even a severely disabled student can successfully respond to this writing assignment and believe it merits special notice. John's "First House" story follows:

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What I Remember of my Life

I am in the Kitchen for my birthday I got a punken cake it not make with punken it is made out of cup cake and lot of frosing and is up side down cak." I said thang mom and she said thare.

I am in the Living room for a chrismas and we had a fack chrismas tree I am allergic to sill chreamas tree so we half to have a fack tree.

I am in the Kitchen do my first modes and it is not to god and very bad me with me do it and he use paine" my mom said sit down on the modes.

I am in the Start ways with my sister pruid me down the Starts and I fell down and hit my hend on the well at the botin of the Start ways and my mom ask with hapfing and I said sister pruid me down the Start.

I am in the Lament well my Dad and we are looking at the sand going thown the side of the house going in is the Lament and thare supping so the sand wood stop coming in and load our the hall and up the concrest back in and leave the hall so the concrest done cast in blouse the cat and rat and mose let the cat and the moses and the moses and the rat cant get in now they cant and it is not going to rase in on me and I said is the cat coming in the lament same more and my dad said not thown here but thown the door with his

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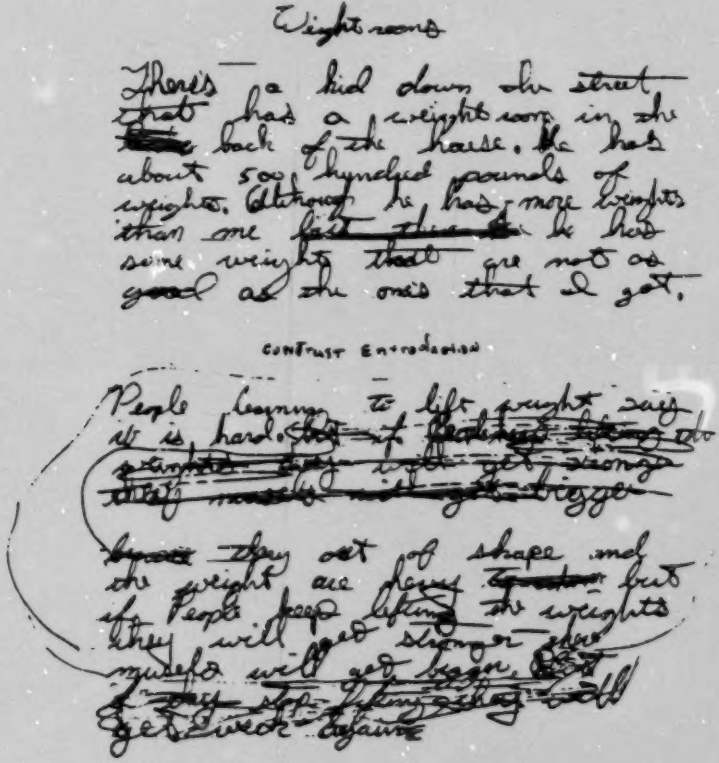
nothing holds it up the rusted
hinges and the house is still standing.

The dialogue and interaction between people in his story, which I had mentioned as part of the First House assignment, prove to be a good way of introducing John to quotation marks. At this point he doesn't have the foggiest idea of where to place these weird scratches, but only one other student has any idea of how quotation marks are used. All are taught by using their work as the text, in short individual conferences. First drafts are always done in pencil, and the final drafts are always written in ink or typed. To reduce frustration whenever mistakes are made on the final draft, I supply a bottle of white correction fluid to be shared by the class. The final product is thus set apart from the informal and frequently messy scribbling common to the prewriting and initial drafting stages. See Don's rough draft as he and the others now make their *own* decisions as to what they wish to write about for their next paper.


Weight room
There's a kid down the street that has a weight room in the back of the house. He has about 500 hundred pounds of weights. Although he has more weights than one last time he had some weights that are not as good as the ones that I got.
CONTRAST Introduction
People beginning to lift weight say it is hard. But if people keep lifting the weights they will get stronger and stronger
they get out of shape and the weight are heavy but if People keep lifting the weights they will get stronger then myself will get bigger
get back to work again

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Don is Len's close classroom buddy. He is Len's opposite in appearance, being short and slim; Jim's opposite in personality, being loud and demanding; close to Gail in vocal volume and non-stop talking; but mostly resembles a cocky little rooster who flings himself into conflict against larger opponents with his usual knack for provoking heated argument and physical confrontation from mere difference of opinion. I suggest to him that his chances of getting hurt in a fight are very probable. I believe he understands hurt and pain, for his face bears the scars of a fairly recent automobile accident.

Most teachers have a "big kid" in at least one of their classes. Sometimes it's a football or basketball player; other times it is a non-athlete. When I taught eighth grade reading in a junior high, Al was the big kid in the class. He soared six feet three inches tall, while most of his classmates came up to his second button on his shirt, just above the belt buckle. Yet, when he stood sideways, he couldn't have been six inches wide.

Len is the "big kid" in this class, but his weight would make around half-a-dozen Als. However, he has a large bone structure to carry two hundred ten pounds on a five foot ten inch frame without being fat, just teenage chubby. He is a good, enthusiastic writer, honest, verbal, friendly, gregarious, and a delight to have in class, except for one maddening idiosyncracy. In the last few minutes before the end of a class period, he frequently selects Don for his personal punching bag. Between him chasing, Don running, both knocking over desks and chairs while I try to restore order in the classroom, I sometimes wonder if the period will ever end.

We are slowly moving away from free-flowing expressive writing to more structured expository forms. Judy's piece shows some emerging paragraph structure, paragraph indentations, margins, title, and proper heading. Considering her somewhat less than positive attitude expressed toward writing a few weeks ago, I am pleased with this initial progress.

Language Art 12-9
Sept 26, 1980

Birthday Party

People all over the world have birthdays. People of all ages + races enjoy birthdays. We have many birthdays in our family. But the best one we had was the one we gave my mom.

On September 22 was my mom's birthday - we gave her a party with chocolate cake + vanila

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ice cream. We gave her a garbage can - we took her to the circus. I had to go to the store to buy a present for her. About 7:00 o'clock my mom is opened her birthday presents - then we put the candles on the cake & lit them - then she will make a wish - blow them out.

The birthday cake was a sheet cake with white frosting - pink flowers on the left hand side with little ones on the right hand side with green leave. On the top said, "Happy Birthday Mom."

After I took the candles out & cut the cake, I gave my Mom the first piece. The second piece went to Wayne - then Bunnie, Jeff - then me - then Bubbie my dog. After the party my own child have to do my dishes because we used paper plates.

Paul rounds out my original nine and is one of the most beautiful black students I've ever taught. He is handsome! He stands about five feet nine, has high cheek bones, full lips, an Anthony Quinn nose, and sparkling black eyes. His friendly good humor and outgoing personality make him a person who is instantly liked. What is more, he likes people, loves sports, loves school (on his own terms), and is popular with the girls, even one that I know of one hundred fifty miles away. He qualifies as the class philosopher or the voice of wisdom, for at age sixteen he has an incredible grasp of common sense about schooling, preparation for life, and the pitfalls of sexual promiscuity. He would say, "Hey Mr. Marik, I'm not goin' to get my life messed up with no girl, no way!" The class listens to Paul, and I am quick to reinforce his statements whenever it is prudent to do so. He is also one of the most severe dyslexics I have seen in years, and his written efforts never are very successful, due also to poor attendance and minimal effort. Fate has both blessed and cursed him. But for a brief neurological dysfunction somewhere deep in the mysteries of biological reproduction and growth, he would have it all.

As we explore the writing process in more detail, we each begin to emerge from our cocooned fears. Their fears center around a possible bludgeoning of their efforts by the teacher. Mine concern the possibility of angry phone calls from parents complaining about stirring up old trauma which has been deposited on distant shores, far from the present surge. I steel my mind against the impending tidal wave of righteous

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fury. None come. Contacts with parents later in the year reveal they are quite pleased to see their offspring come home with something positive to say to them about school work. For too many years whenever the subject of school had come up, it had meant bad news.

The general thrust of this First House unit has stimulated thinking about the past, present, and how very far they have come since early times. I have established a very accepting, gently judgmental, sympathetic approach in which they write often and are praised often. Together we laugh at our sometimes humorous attempts to put our thoughts on paper—like Don in one of his final drafts in which he placed the introductory paragraph in the middle of page two, then went on to copy the same two paragraphs from page one, word-for-word, on page three, and then blamed the teacher for telling him to do that! (see pp. 74-86). Overall, what pleases me most about their writing is that it pleases them. We share a mutual and growing excitement.

Judy, Cathy, and Becky, the female equivalent of the Three Musketeers, come in nearly every day, blowing and cursing about boys, teachers, school assignments, girls ("those bitches"), and countless other conflicts, frustrations, and perceived injustices. The tumult of their lives links them together in a common bond. I surmise it is the usual expression of fierce loyalities common to the teenager and recognize that as friendships at this age run hot and cold, I will not be too surprised if this closeness does not last the semester.

When the break finally comes, what does surprise me is the virulence of the attack on Becky by Judy and Cathy. Becky abruptly stops coming to class. Cathy explodes, "If she says anything about me, I'll kick her fuckin' ass!"

I am stunned by this sudden outburst and softly respond, "Say what about you?" Cathy and Judy maintain eye contact with such intensity that all activity in the room stops. There is a powerful and unknown significance in the silence of that moment that seems to go far beyond the parting of a teenage friendship. I ask again for explanation.

Judy crisply replies, "It ain't nuthin'!" Into the quiet room, from far down the hall, comes the sound of a heavy door being slammed shut. I will not see Becky in my class the remainder of the year. Something has happened, but no one is talking.

II

Methodology: Considerations in Teaching the Writing Process

Many writers on composition describe the composing activity as a multistep process involving a number of separate stages. Petrosky and Broziek (1979) note "conceptualizing, incubation-formation and editing-revising." Cummings (1979) cites "drafting, editing and publishing." Wallace (1926) and Cowley (1961) identify a four-stage process; Wilson (1954) sees a sequence of five steps. Since the classical rhetorical divisions of ancient Greece, there seems to be no universal agreement in modern times as to the number of steps or stages in the composing process. In addition, there is little agreement on the terminology used. One reads of "illumination," "particles," "waves," "producing systems," "reformulations," "intellectual and syntactical strategies," and dozens of other descriptions used to isolate and identify parts of the composing process. The suggestion is strong that a writer on the subject of composition use as many stages, steps, terms, or interpretations as desired. In this I am no different, and the chart I've made for my special education students has five steps or stages (see Figure One).

Although this chart identifies five stages, only two basic mental processes are involved: the creative and the judgmental. The creative, idea-generating (prewriting-drafting) stage includes activities such as scribbling, seeing relationships, remembering, making journal entries, free-writing, and following the hunches of an idea as it wanders on and off the path of an article or story trying to lead somewhere. That an idea may lead to a dead end is an accepted part of the initial stage. The important thing in a free-association activity is for the writer to keep pushing on and from all the seemingly non-productive stumbling about, discover insights which may prove far more exciting than the originally conceived or outlined essay.

The judgmental (revising-editing) stage includes paragraphing for unity and coherence, considering word choice, considering audience, and proofreading for spelling, punctuation, and other mechanical/grammatical

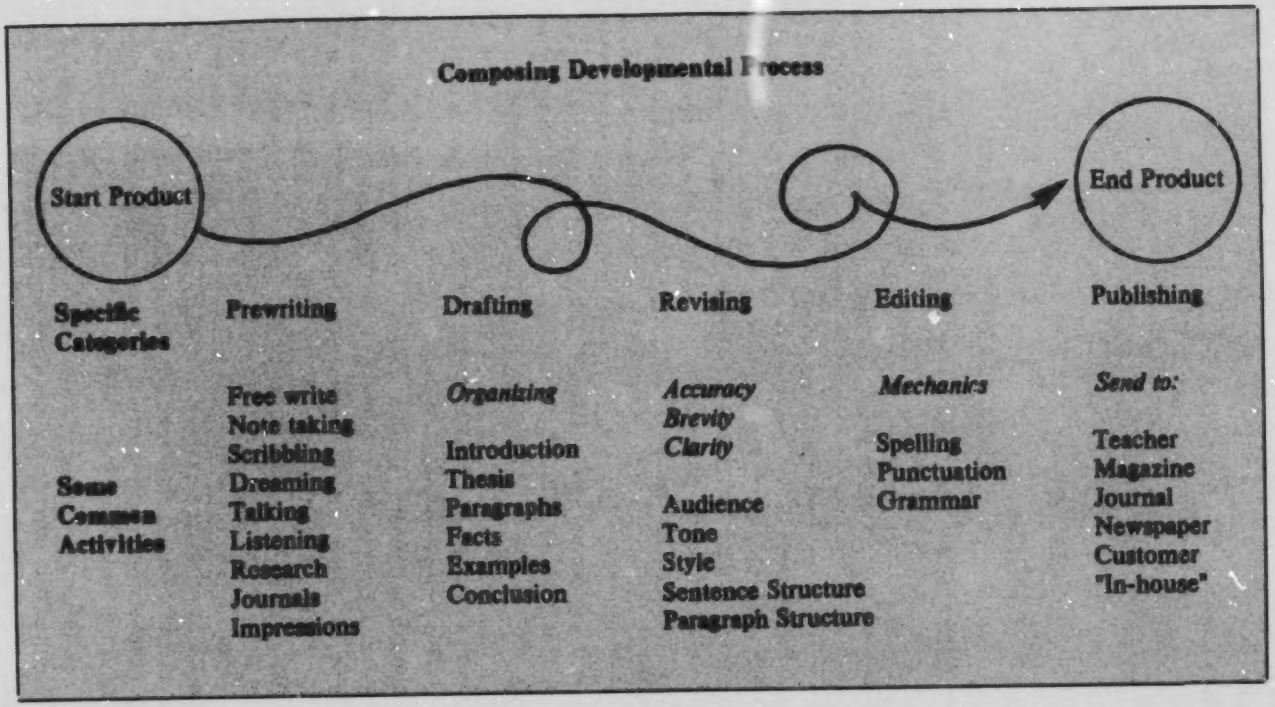

Composing Developmental Process
Start Product
End Product
Specific Categories
Prewriting
Drafting
Revising
Editing
Publishing
Some Common Activities
Free write
Note taking
Scribbling
Dreaming
Talking
Listening
Research
Journals
Impressions
Organizing
Introduction
Thesis
Paragraphs
Facts
Examples
Conclusion
Accuracy
Brevity
Clarity
Audience
Tone
Style
Sentence Structure
Paragraph Structure
Mechanics
Spelling
Punctuation
Grammar
Send to:
Teacher
Magazine
Journal
Newspaper
Customer
"In-house"

Figure Two

errors. This activity should come later in the composing sequence; that is, first the ideas are generated and written down, *then* they are judged for appropriateness. The process is similar to that created many years ago to solve problems in industry. Osborn described the technique in *Applied Imagination* and *Wake Up Your Mind.* Later, Clark's *Brainstorming* detailed group and individual activities which are used to generate and judge ideas. The analogy of water is used: if one has "hot" creative ideas, their value is not likely to become apparent if they are immediately submitted to "cold" judgment. Stated another way, the end product of simultaneously mixing hot and cold water from a common tap produces lukewarm and unsatisfactory results. For some of my students, not separating these two processes may have led to their avoiding writing because their written efforts never seemed to reflect adequately the "hot" interest of their original, briefly-held idea.

However, the solution is seldom a matter of explaining the sequence to them. Words fail. Exercises such as free writing (Elbow) help break the over-judicial attention to every word as it is written, but other factors are at work here. The ability to use the composing process or sequence is complicated by a variety of dysfunctions. Three commonly recognized disabilities are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. All can be remediated to some degree by the use of, respectively, eye glasses, hearing aids, and physical therapy. Possibly less well known are intraneurosensory, interneurosensory, and integrative dysfunctions. (Johnson and Myklebust, *Learning Disabilities*)

Intraneurosensory dysfunctions are learning disabilities which affect mainly one system in the brain, such as the auditory, visual, or kinesthetic system. For example, an auditory dysfunction may show up as a sequentialization problem which prevents a student from understanding a series of composition instructions spoken at a moderately rapid pace. A student with this difficulty needs also to *see* the instructions on a sharp ditto sheet, on the front board, or projected on an overhead transparency.

Interneurosensory dysfunctions affect more than one system in the brain. Dyslexia, a condition associated with a reading problem, is an example of intraneurosensory dysfunction. Associated with this condition are handwriting difficulties in forming letters and visual-perceptual problems resulting in spelling mistakes, all of which complicate the task of a composition teacher trying to read beyond mechanical errors to identify the quality of thinking in an essay.

Integrative dysfunctions affect the systems as they try to function simultaneously. The importance for composition teachers is that the inner language system from which all meaning and significance takes

shape may be disrupted, resulting in inaccurate, fragmented, or incomplete sentences (kernel thought-units surfacing without much connection to the written context). In reading good prose as a model for writing, a student's reading rate may be adequate, but comprehension is likely to be a problem. In general, I have found the "modeling" approach in which students are encouraged to read good prose with the hope that stylistic skill will rub off on written efforts is not effective. Wrensch regards this as "the bankrupt 'models' approach to writing. Most of us think that two, or five, or a thousand people telling students to *look* at essays are not as effective as one person encouraging the *writing* of essays." ("What Help Can We Expect from Reading Teachers," p. 69) I agree. My students read assigned work and do the writing assignments, but the transfer of skills from read material to written effort does not happen. They do each activity in apparent isolation and perceive little connection between the two. Hence, I keep exercises outside their own work to a minimum and use very little commercially published material.

There probably is no learning that is purely intraneurosensory, and the other categories provide a convenient way of looking at learning problems in general and understanding writing dysfunctions in particular. "Messy" papers, misspelled words, sentence fragments, incompletely understood assignments or even bizarre attempts to complete work can generally be traced to specific learning dysfunctions. A good diagnostic test battery can be administered in a day or two. That is the easy part. The hard part is to design activities which can help a student break through the crust of writing failures so that the human being inside can communicate to others with some confidence, skill, and knowledge.

The interpretation of diagnosis can also be misleading. For example, "inability to attend to a task, distractability, low motivation, short attention span" are descriptions I have read in folders which special education teachers receive on each student. This information (which I seldom read before having taught a student for a month), can make the educational effort seem quite hopeless, an *a priori* judgment that can too easily become a self-fulfilling prophesy of failure. I am convinced these same students will work very long and with good concentration if they can be "hooked" on an activity that has value they can perceive. Indeed, in apparent contradiction to diagnosis, parents note an ability of their offspring to concentrate, frequently commenting that their son or daughter diagnosed as "distractable" or "inattentive" can be absorbed for hours and weeks fixing a car, motorcycle, or lawnmower engine.

While low motivation for academic work and specific learning disabilities affect the student's writing effort, another problem for the teacher is designing assignments that can be understood. The ability to structure assignments in helpful ways is a skill that needs to be developed by both

the regular and special education teacher. Hoffman and Schifsky define the procedure:

> A good writing assignment recognizes all the student's needs and his developmental maturity. It provides needed guidance from the prewriting through the writing through the rewriting stages. It provides a definite route through the assignment, a route which allows many choices but which enables the student to arrive at his destination. A productive and useful writing assignment requires planning that structures the assignment for both teacher and student. Thus, when designing assignments, the teacher of writing, in fact any teacher, must take such variables as aim, audience, mode, tone, organization, style into consideration if he hopes to construct an assignment that: 1) leads the student to do purposeful writing, and 2) enables the instructor to develop useful criteria for evaluating the student's writing. ("Designing Writing Assignments," p. 44)

I find it difficult to keep all these considerations in mind, but a teacher unaware of how the structure of assignments can negatively affect the special education student may conclude that the student is either not capable of or interested in completing the work. In reality, assignments that are poorly designed favor only those students who have sufficient motivation and writing experience to succeed with minimal information and direction. The special education student, unusually bothered by vagueness, does not question confusing instructions because in his world instructions have generally always been confusing, especially if an auditory-processing deficit is present. Compounding this problem is that when he did understand an assignment, he had so few skills that he did not know how to respond appropriately. Add to this years of negative comments on whatever was handed in, and by the time he arrives at high school, he already knows all the ways to fail, and none of the ways to succeed.

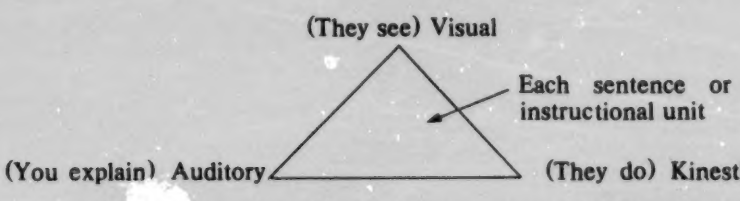
Methodology: Teaching the Special Education Student

Education should be a cultivation of the intellect, a growing and stretching into greater levels of awareness, abstractions, and interpretations. I believe the process of composition best lends itself to achieving this ideal. In our school district, consultants from other states come to share their expertise with us in one- and two-day day workshops. Over the years, all presentations have had a common theme: individualized, behavior modification, engineered classrooms. I have used these instructional models because the psychology and statistics presented are impressive. I confess to very limited success with such techniques on the high

school level. Sometimes I even have trouble being open-minded to the latest presenter, as in a recent workshop.

Sixty of us were gathered at the stage end of a cavernous, 400-folding-chair-capacity auditorium. A young man standing at floor level directly in front of the stage had been lecturing and projecting models of cubical classroom arrangements on a large screen all morning. We broke for lunch, and later in the afternoon someone asked how this individualized system could be used in a regular class of thirty students. Our speaker explained that he had done this by placing wheels on a stool and sliding down aisles in two minute sessions with each student. At this point, it had been a very long, hot day and some teachers were sprawled on the floor, others were standing, and a small cluster were respectfully trying to hang on to every word. Somehow it struck me that the thought of spending the remainder of my educational career sliding down aisles with coasters on my rear didn't grab me where it should. I clicked on my fantasy channel and manfully rode out the behavior-modification, individualized-study disaster. It seems to me that a student who is programmed to respond with eighty percent mastery on specific tasks has not mastered these tasks as much as become enslaved by them. The basis for much behavior modification or programming, derived from conditioning experiments with pigeons and rats, hardly seems a model compatible with the education of the human intellect.

Small-group instruction (five to ten) works for me. The best methodological approach is to tell them, show them, let them do, show them again, have them proceed bit by small bit under close supervision. Present new information three ways. For example, with a lesson on identifying the controlling idea in a topic sentence, I project the exercise on the overhead screen (visual), explain and discuss it (auditory), and have the students underline the controlling idea on an identical ditto sheet (kinesthetic reinforcement). *Each* sentence is taught as if it were enclosed within a three part instructional sequence:



In this [illegible]on, I work through ten sentences before assigning the remaining ten. Admittedly this is a slow process, but one that is repeated whenever new information is presented. The ironic part of the procedure is that while these students could benefit from help on all twenty sentences, they lack the interest to concentrate on academics for

anything but small time-periods. Thus work on their own is an imperfect instructional compromise, but one that recognizes their limitations.

At best, this methodology is not sure-fire, nor without some problems. As previously pointed out, students who exhibit integrative dysfunction may not respond to a multisensory approach because, while the sight, hearing, and fine motor skills function well independently, they may not function well simultaneously. For example, typical enrichment efforts using films on Shakespearean plays, biological reproduction, historical figures, or other subjects may result in students putting their heads down on the desk or covering their ears to stop the simultaneous rapid bombardment of sight and sound of the dysfunctioning integrative system. In my experience, however, those who cannot benefit from the multisensory approach are in the minority, providing the *rate* of material presented is not too fast. An example of filmed information appropriately paced is Alistair Cooke's *America* series.

Profile of a Special Education Student

How does a student become "Special Ed."? Insults to the developing fetus, trouble during delivery, childhood diseases associated with high fever, accidents and genetic patterns are all factors in the profile. Males seem to outnumber females by almost eight to one. However, it is not overly productive for the classroom teacher to speculate on how these things happen. (Nor is it worthwhile for parents to assume heavy guilt for things that may well have been largely beyond their control.) It is better to try to deal with what is, and understand some of the problems a special education student has when mainstreamed into a regular class.

Terry Shockley's experience is common. Terry is a broad-shouldered lad whose awkward strength makes him ill at ease in a regular classroom with thirty others. His yellowish-red hair sprouts out and bends down like a stalk of September straw. It has not regularly been in contact with a comb since sixth grade. He missed the appointed time for class registration at the beginning of the year, and wandered in and out of the building until caught by the vice principal during the third week of school. He is given the usual academic schedule. Terry wants to be a welder and earn "big bucks." However, he lacks fine motor coordination and the reading skills required to learn this technical trade and pass certification tests. He inflexibly resists any education not directly and obviously related to his unrealistic plan. On Monday he arrives in fifth period Language Arts class. They are reading *Macbeth.*

Ms. Jones wants a 250-300 word analysis of Lady Macbeth's soliloquy. After a brief discussion, the class busily sets to its task. Terry's problem is that he does not know how to spell *Language Arts.* He writes "langeage," puzzles over it, knows it doesn't look right, scratches it out

and writes "LA." Next, he glances around to find out how to spell *September.* He can't locate the room calendar, so copies the spelling from the nearest neighbor. He looks up just as Ms. Jones is staring disapprovingly at him. From a dittoed assignment sheet, he copies the title, but has transposed the *o* and *i* in *soliloquy,* realizes his error and scratches out the title with a ball point pen (he remembered to bring one today). His correction is messy, and he knows not to turn in a messy paper. He crumples it up and starts again. After two more tries he finally has the correct heading and title information. The nearly blank sheet of paper stretches before him like the great Sahara, and he is an insignificant speck standing on the edge. He knows the feeling well, having been at this place many times before. A mind paralysis sets in. Suddenly the bell rings. Papers are turned in.

The remainder of the week is miserable. Terry tries to catch up in all his classes, and except for P.E. and individualized math, he is hopelessly behind. He attempts to read *Macbeth* and follow along with class discussions. The next Monday another of his efforts is handed back with an "E" grade, with the comment to stop wasting time and start working. He mumbles something like "she-it" under his breath. From his point of view, he tried all week, did not waste time, and still got an "E." No matter how hard he tries or how long he works, he'll never understand why the ol' bat could not wash all that blood from her hands. Ultimately, he is referred to the counselor, removed from that class, tested, and finally arrives in my class. For the school administration, the counselor, the regular teacher, the parent, the problem is solved. For the student, however, this is not a banner day in his life because it seems like the end of the road. He will say he doesn't want to be in my class with all those dumb kids. I've got to deal with that feeling and find some way to get under his tough hide and get him hooked on something. If I can get him to write his guts out, make him feel that whatever he has to say is important, feel a sense of pride in that accomplishment, he'll cast off from desert shores, unfurl his sails, and set a worthwhile course through the dangerous but exciting shoals of academia.

It is tempting to over-generalize about special education students like Terry. In reality there are many types of distinct behaviors even within carefully diagnosed categories. Whereas many have reasonably good attendance and work hard, Terry is part of that splinter group that tends to fall on their own swords. Typical patterns find them registering late and therefore having a poor selection of classes. Others register on time, receive excellent schedules, then do not show up in class for weeks. Still others register on time, attend classes regularly for the first week or so, then skip enough class periods every week to ensure failure. This becomes a most maddening, frustrating pattern for special education

teachers trying to help those who will only minimally help themselves. Fortunately not all special education students are in this category.

A very common problem, however, is created when special education students drop into my class unexpectedly throughout the semester. Some come from other schools, off the streets, or from regular classes where they are failing. How do I give a September start in the middle of October or November? I imperfectly resolve the problem in two ways: if the contact class teacher is desperate to have the student removed, or if the student is newly enrolled, he enters my class and does high interest, low-comprehension-level reading selections from Educational Development Laboratories "Controlled Reading Study Guide," which I used when teaching similar students in the Job Corps. This series has underlined topic sentences, introductions, conclusions and other paragraph/essay parts, emphasizing the same areas I am working with in composition instruction. While the new student is reading these selections, the class goes on with composition assignments and he can see, hear, and become aware of essay expectations. I tell him that as soon as we are finished with this unit, he will get a chance to write too. The option of joining in at any time is encouraged, and generally after a few class sessions of comprehension reading, he can be drawn in to start some expressive writing. It is critical that he approach the writing activity without feeling forced to produce. Frequent review sessions with the class help him obtain enough basic information to join in successfully and make a contribution.

The other option is to ask the contact teacher to keep him in class until I start a new unit, then transfer him into my class. This option is workable in our building because of an understanding and dedicated staff.

Summary

Despite limitations previously noted, multisensory instruction seems to offer the greatest chance of success for teaching the elements of composition to special education students. While some students may be able to learn more from the auditory channel than from the visual, if all of a student's senses can be activated in an instructional unit, his ability to comprehend material presented will be greatly enhanced, provided the rate of instruction is appropriately regulated. This means it will take far longer to move through the composing stages than would be true of a regular class starting at the same time.

In addition, despite all the plaudits for individualized study, small group instruction offers far more advantages than tracking students into isolated units keyed to their disabilities. In small groups, the interaction of enthusiastic dialogue, plans, options, mutual frustrations and support provides on-going stimulus to keep the motivation high and the writing

process moving from assignment to assignment. Composition growth is not an isolated academic phenomenon but a life-slice, where many facets of the emerging teenage personality are worked out simultaneously in the creative context of discovering ideas and strategies for written discourse. Perhaps more than any other group, special education students need this mirror experience to judge how they look, sound, and feel to others. Certain revelations, personal insights, and options are most likely to occur only when the young intellectual fabric stretches to express and deal with the personal reactions of peers in the composing classroom.

Assignment design is a critical consideration for writing success. Special education students can best follow assignments which are very specific, limited in scope, and carefully defined. Even the most thoroughly written explanation is not guaranteed to be the perfect solution. There will always be an unusual number of questions and much clarification needed because individual perceptions of an assignment come from disabled physiological systems attempting to understand instructions often designed for non-disabled learners.

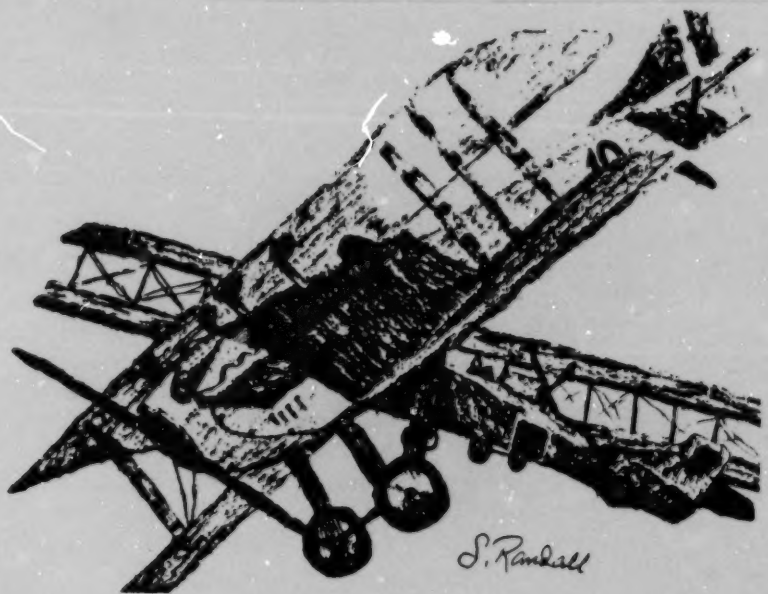
In Chapter One, I encouraged being "gently judgmental" and supportive as a way of helping students through the writing/composing process. Special education teachers will quickly recognize this advice as only a half truth. They have been conned by statements like this too often. The other part of the truth is the toughness, meanness, and discipline needed to keep classes from flying apart at the seams. In my special education classes, I will go to any lengths consistent with professional standards and permissible under the law to maintain discipline and order. I will hold parent conferences, send home letters, request temporary removal of disruptive students, contact the counseling staff, call in a consultant, berate a student, put peer pressure on the unruly, deny free time, get angry, and anything else I can think of to establish one central understanding. That is this: my classroom is a place of learning. It is not the only place where learning takes place, but it is the main place in school where I am fully responsible for what happens or does not happen. If anything positive is to happen, it can only happen in an atmosphere of mutual respect and manners. A sense of security and teacher control must prevail, otherwise creativity and risk-taking necessary for intellectual growth are throttled because no one wants to be verbally or physically attacked for what they write or say. I am thus very hard on students initially if they do not understand the importance of self-discipline. The immature, who previously may have been allowed to act out in classes, go out of my class muttering what a mean bastard I am. By the end of the semester they plead to stay in my class for the remainder of the year. Why? Because they know I care. If I didn't, I wouldn't try so hard or be so

concerned about their manners and efforts. They come back for an even more compelling reason: their writing efforts please and excite them. They become caught up in a developing sense of mastery in an area in which they previously have had no success. If they, in the process, work hard and become well-mannered, we may even become friends. But manners come first!

Bill Linn, a faculty member from the University of Michigan-Dearborne, left his college post to teach in an urban high school in South Bronx. One of his insights at the conclusion of that year was this:

> Early on—the earlier the better—students must be forced to converse and interact with each other and with the instructor in a civilized fashion. Until this is done schools will be a meaningless sham. All the syllabi, lesson plans, and textbooks in the world will not change this basic reality. ("Numbers and Angela II," p. 22)

In the contact or special education classroom, good manners and respect for others must prevail or all is, as Linn points out, "meaningless sham."



III

An Autumn Walk

Gail transferred from my first period composition class to my third period U.S. History class. I appreciated the irony, for if I am going to reel out of class feeling as though I've just been through a fifty-five minute artillery barrage on the front lines from her loud voice, what better time than when reading about the effects of shell shock on World War I troops trapped in the trenches. There are similarities. We both successfully survived the year, I think, although some of my colleagues insist I've gone slightly deaf in the left ear.

Two new students enter class, Sally Lea and Brenda Dandridge. They are so different! Sally is short and plump with a round pumpkin face topped with a pony tail stem. She has a marvelous smile that stretches from ear to ear, a little bulb of a nose, and two almond-shaped eyes deeply set over shiny cheeks. Sally is my first special education foreign student and I wonder if her grasp of English will be strong enough to benefit from composition instruction. I anticipate this will be a challenge.

Brenda is a tall, slim, cream-skinned blond of Irish-Nordic extraction. Her hair reminds me of a Shirley Temple style, with many short, tight curls. She is pleasant, delicately shy, and quickly catches on to the classroom routine and writing assignments.

I've stopped assigning free writing sessions because they have become at best counterproductive, at worst, dangerous. Don has filled page after page with the phrase "I can't think of anything to say." Ron, the silent, deadly serious student, has taken free writing time to produce extremely demeaning, assaultive attacks on me and my teaching. His work is so caustic that I finally call his mother to get an explanation for this tremendous hostility.

Her answer explains all. Ron's father has inoperable cancer. It has been, typically, a prolonged agony of trips to the hospital, radiation treatment, chemotherapy, an occasional flush of optimism, then regression.

Through the peaks and valleys of hope and despair, Ron has ridden a spirit-shattering roller coaster for nearly a year. In these final days, a sensitive young lad sees his father waste away, slipping through his hands into darkness, while his teenage soul cries out for male guidance, companionship, and love. When Ron came home from the hospital after hearing the final irrevocable diagnosis, he went into his father's bedroom. He stared at the neatly made bed, then spun around to choke out the final crushing realization, "My Dad is dying!" He screamed, "Why?" and was answered only by the sound of his mother's soft weeping. One week later he entered my composition class.

Days have blurred into weeks and somewhere a great celestial pendulum softly ticks off another month. It is time to move from expressive assignments to more expository forms. My files bulge with materials collected during recurrent periods of insecurity. They have been only partly and imperfectly used. Yet I can't bring myself to assign textbook exercises in grammar, punctuation, and usage which don't seem to make much difference in students' written efforts. From a bookcase filled with composition texts, workbooks, copies of the *English Journal, CCC,* etc., I thumb through Stanford and Smith's *A Guidebook for Teaching Composition,* one of my favorite issues when teaching regular high school language arts classes. On page twenty-nine I find a familiar suggestion, "An Autumn Walk in the Woods."

One windowed wall of my classroom overlooks an inner courtyard with a somewhat "wooded" feeling, containing two trees and bushes of various sizes. It is October and some leaves have been bronzed into gold greens, muted yellows, and subtle shades of orange. A few nut-brown leaves skitter stiffly across a cement patio as others swirl down with the cool puffs of a fall lingering on the edge of winter. The connection seems obvious. We can sit or move around the classroom and directly record the elements of an autumn walk in the woods by looking out the window. Other classes face this court, so it isn't practical to go into the court and possibly disturb them. I am excited about having seen this connection, but the more I think of the activity, the less attractive it becomes. Over the weekend, the random pieces of a good idea come together like the completed scene of a giant puzzle; what emerges in the final product is a picture of a man—Jim Sabol.

Jim Sabol, consultant for the Bellevue, Washington, School District, has designed composing activities that can be used with most any grade level, from elementary through high school. I decide to try his naming and attributing approach by sending my students for a walk through the Goat Farm, a four acre, heavily wooded area adjacent to our school. Over twenty years ago this site had actually been the grazing field for goats, but now it is used as an unapproved dump yard for

neighborhood junk. Each student is given a clipboard on which are mounted the following instructions:

RHETORICAL INVENTION (Phase I)

GATHERING (Impressions) for: _____

Directions: On a 10 minute walk, list as many names of things as you can. For example, what do you see, hear, feel, taste, or smell? Do your observations in *slow motion.* Stop, take a sensory snapshot of what you are facing. Describe it in detail before you move on. In other words, if you are looking at a tree, imagine you have just taken a picture of it, then taken that picture and made a giant poster of it. What are all the pieces of a tree that you could name, if you had an hour to sit down, study the poster and make a list of its parts?

Now don't all go out and write about a tree for 10 minutes!

Try to get some information on all the senses. Obviously, taste may be difficult (that's only for the very brave).

Question. If you listened very carefully, how many different sounds could you hear and write down?
Be back promptly! It is now _____ Be back at _____

Name: _____

The class leaves in various moods. Don and Paul are excited, mainly about getting out of classwork (or so they think). Len and Jim are cooperative, Ron sullen, Sally confused as usual, Brenda and Judy non-commital. Cathy says, "This is dumb!" I stop by the principal's office on the way out to take care of a minor problem, emerge moments later and walk toward the door leading onto the woods. What I expect to see is a cluster of students huddled just outside the door, embarrassed and uneasy with the nature of this crazy assignment, laughing, talking, and fooling around. What I see is even worse than I had expected—not a student in sight. I feel a flush of anger and say, "Damn!" between clenched teeth, assuming that all have taken off.

Suddenly, across the road through a thicket of alders, comes Don, bounding across my view like a jackrabbit heading for a hole. "Hey, lookit here! Here's some more junk!" He is quickly followed by several

others, clip boards grasped tightly under their arms. I feel relieved—and guilty for having doubted these great kids. I extend the time of the ten minute walk to last the remainder of the period.

Just before the bell rings, we assemble in class. They are bubbling. Cathy, initially my most negative participant, now says, "Mr. Marik, can we do this again tomorrow?"

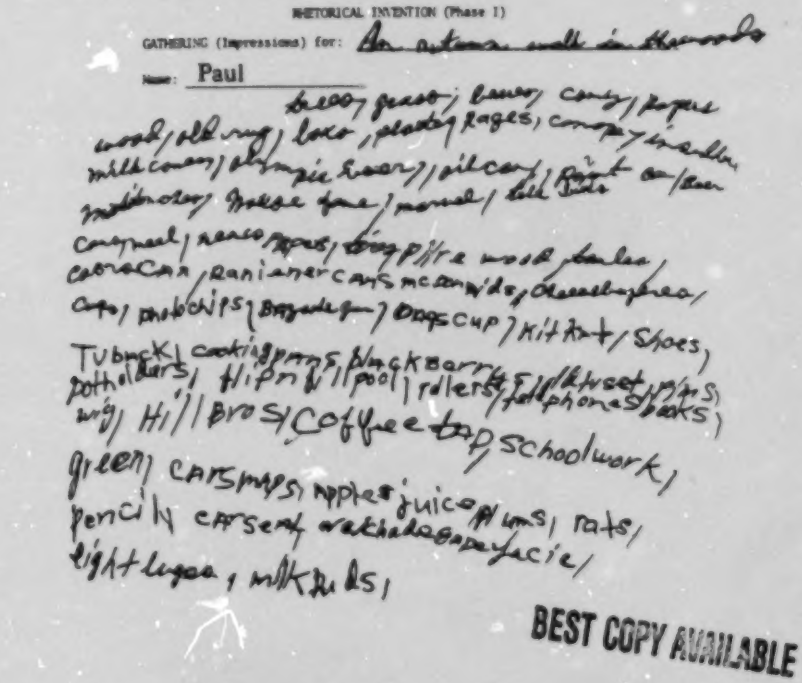
I do not answer, but just look at her, shake my head, glance upward and say, "Why me Lord?" They laugh, place their clipboards on a side table, and the bell rings.

The following samples indicate the prewriting or information-gathering stage. Don has gathered one hundred thirty eight words for the high score; Judy has collected eighty for an average effort, and Paul has fifty-six words for the low score. All have a list of words on their sheets which will be used for the next phase in the composing process. What is being accomplished here? D'Angelo states, "We want to make the process of invention more selfconscious and more economical for compositional purposes. A scheme...is one kind of possibility for this purpose." (*A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric*, p. 47) He suggests making a diagram showing relationships of topics. For my purpose, the accumulation of words (nouns) as a starting point helps make the prewriting stage more of a conscious activity (see samples).

RHETORICAL INVENTION (Phase I)

GATHERING (Impressions) for: An autumn walk in the woods

Name: Paul



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RHETORICAL INVENTION (Phase I)

GATHERING (Impressions) for: An autumn walk in the Woods

Name: Judy

Dirts, rocks, weeds, wood, grass, Stricher
Dead leave berrys paper. cups straw platic milk
cor ton rug talet paper people smoking and drinking
Oilcans beertops dog bone tree stumps oil Filter
candy rapers people walking cardboard Boxs
Pinecone glass beer can glove Cigarettes raper
Cigarette butt branch brick I hear a Dog
Book I hear a bird Doritas bag cratt lighter
instead breakfast wendys milk shake pants
underware shoes, baby shirt, Socks newspaper
orange juice can twopeople walking
tire car tract. frisby panits can plastic spoon
matras car motor we see mr markie
music blue sky ~~I saw a~~ bird I smell
air School Bell rings water pen Foot print.
J mush coat Our Rainer cap Downy bottle
milk Duds Funny tree road apple kentucky
Fried chicken a big rock sandwich bag
bus pass roots pills bark clouds coffeecup holes ter
fence ditch Fire cracker

The next day I place the title "An Autumn Walk in the Woods" on the board, and everyone spontaneously reads aloud names of objects they had written on their "Gathering" sheet as I quickly write them down. When the chalk dust settles, nearly one hundred randomly selected words are displayed. What is revealed is a visual picture of the great many mental decisions that confront a writer when trying to organize data into a unified piece of writing (see sample).

Noun (Name) Gathering

An Autumn Walk in the Woods

rug	dirt	step ladder	car mat
grocery cart	phone book	paint brush	gutters
plastic bag	T shirt	cig. butt	coffee can
glass	coat	spray can	dry leaves
burger box	cardboard box	toilet paper	headlight

grass	dead rat	candy wrappers	car seat
cement	anti-freeze	oil filter	burnt bed
brick	transmission fluid	asphalt	broom
basket	platform (in tree)	notebook	headphones
snakes	pipe	oil can	tires
pictures	wire fence	mystery oil	rims
maps	garden hose	lighter fluid	worms
styrofoam	gum	pop cans	couch
magazines	number plates	sheets	chair
newspapers	flowers	pen	milk carton
roofing	Rainier beer bottle	dog dung	battery
shingles	Shlitz beer bottle	mattress	

The list also provides an interesting environmental commentary on our junk-diseased society which I will later work into expository pieces on environmental pollution. A trip around some urban school yards might produce enough similar items to write about. The next clustering phase actively encourages conscious decision-making by considering what main categories are suggested by the accumulated data, and what subcategories might exist within each category. All students are encouraged to make individual choices by grouping words according to how they perceive their own listed (researched) data.

Preparation for the clustering phase is fairly easy. With a paper cutter, I slice rectangular strips of paper measuring one-half by three inches. Regular-weight scrap paper can be used, manila tagboard is better, but the best material is the heavier trim ends from a school graphic arts department or commercial printing shop. Large electrically-powered paper slicers can quickly cut enough to fill a shoe box. Approximately eighty strips per student is an adequate starting amount. At the same time, five to ten larger one inch by nine inch strips should be cut for each student.

After making certain a good sampling of words has been obtained from each student, I ask how these randomly displayed words on the board can be classified into common categories. Judy quickly says, "Well, household stuff—you know, like a couch." I write "Household Stuff" in a large heading on another section of the front board, and soon many are suggesting "mattress, chair," and so on. I enter these names under this category and cross them off the main list. Len, who has a consuming interest in cars, quickly gives me ten items under an "Automotive" category. After they understand the clustering idea, I give them the one-half by three inch strips.

Next they take their own "Gathering" clipboard lists, copy all the words onto these strips, then group them into categories suggested by the words on their lists. During this process, Judy asks, "Mr. Marik, does

this word go with this group?"

"What does it suggest to you?"

"Uh, I don't know."

"Do you think it might fit under this category? Why?" This becomes a common interaction as the selection activity proceeds. They bend over their work, grouping and regrouping words, sharpening ideas of what goes where. I suggest that words which do not fit be placed to one side in a "discard" pile. Before going on to the next step, I circulate one final time, check each category, and ask, "Can you tell me how you would describe your large or main groupings?" They verbalize a general description for each major list of word strips arranged in columns.

Last, I distribute the one inch by nine inch strips. On these strips students write a sentence which describes their main or large categories just as each has explained them to me orally. These large strips are placed on the very front edge of the desk, equally spaced from left to right, directly above the columns of one-half by three inch strips. This placement is to indicate where the topic sentence will be when paragraphs are written. Later, as they are able, I tell them that the topic sentence can be moved around within a paragraph, but initially I keep it simple.

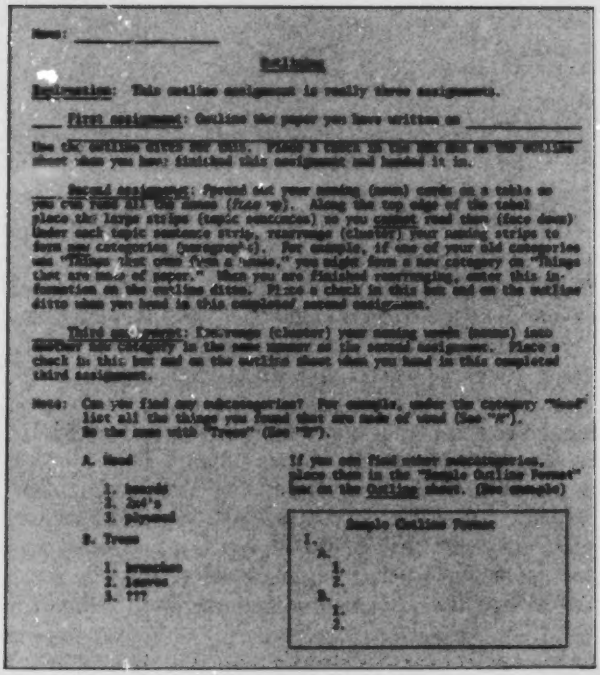
To assist drafting a topic sentence on the one by nine inch strips, I write a few generalized sentence patterns on the front board:

There are many things that go in a house.
I found many things that belong to....
One could find many things....

The word "thing" is part of their familiar vocabulary and thus is a non-threatening and informal way to get into making statements to use as topic sentences. They complete this portion of the lesson when all one by nine inch topic sentence strips have been placed above the respective columns of one-half by three inch strips. To assist this activity I also bring in two six foot tables to provide more surface area. The outline is introduced next.

The Outline

The outline assignment sheet contains a place to check off "First Assignment, Second Assignment, Third Assignment" (see Figure Three). I give three assignments to teach students to restructure the same collected data in two more ways, to generate potentially two more essays using the same data. Len, speaking to a common problem and looking at a blank sheet of paper, notes, "I can't think of nuthin to say!" Taking the same data and rearranging it in two more ways, and noting that it can be classified in many other ways, helps the special education writer with the idea-generating process. Also, during the subsequent drafting stage, skill



Name: _____ _____

Outlining

Explanation: This outline assignment is really three assignments.

___ First assignment: Outline the paper you have written on _____

Use the OK outline given for this. Place a check in the box and on the outline sheet when you have finished this assignment and handed it in.

___ Second assignment: Spread out your nouning (noun) cards on a table so you can read all the nouns (Idea "B"). Along the top edge of the label place the large strips (topic sentences) so you cannot read them (face down) Under each topic sentence strip, rearrange (cluster) your nouning strips to form new categories (newsprep's). For example, if one of your old categories was "Things that come from a house," you might form a new category on "Things that are made of paper." When you are finished rearranging, enter this information on the outline ditto. Place a check in this box and on the outline ditto when you hand in this completed second assignment.

___ Third assignment: Rearrange (cluster) your nouning words (nouns) into another new category in the same manner as the second assignment. Place a check in this box and on the outline sheet when you hand in this completed third assignment.

Note: Can you find any subcategories? For example, under the category "Wood" list all the things you found that are made of wood (See "A"). Do the same with "Trees" (See "B").

A. Wood

1. boards
2. 2x4's
3. plywood

B. Trees

1. branches
2. leaves
3. ???

If you can find other subcategories, place them in the "Simple Outline Format" box on the Outline sheet. (See example)

Simple Outline Format

I.
A.
1.
2.
B.
1.
2.

Figure Three

in classifying helps students organize their essay structure according to how they can perceive and arrange the same data. I demonstrate this principle on the board:

Common data	*Reclassified*	*Reclassified*
Things that come from a house	Things that are made from paper	Things that are made from metal
bed	boxes	mattress
mattress	toilet paper	spring
spring	notebook	wire
wire		

To reinforce this idea, class discussion centers on asking questions about how many arrangements can be made. For example, "Can you classify objects that have black printing on them?" "Can you classify plastic

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objects that are round, square, or rectangular?" "Can you classify objects according to color?"

Other Classifications:

Weight	*Colors*	*Size*	*Shape*	*Texture*
heavy	red	small	round	rough
light	yellow	big	square	smooth
	green		rectangular	porous

The class is now ready to enter data on the outline form. Topic sentence information from the one by nine inch strips is copied onto the outline form opposite the Roman numerals I, II, III, IV, V, identified as *paragraph.* Words from the one-half by three inch strips are added under each "paragraph." (The choice of five paragraphs is quite arbitrary; I ran out of space to place more Roman numerals on the bottom of the page. They are encouraged to continue on another sheet of paper. In practice, some essays are three paragraphs, others eight.) The shortened outline subdivisions are listed to prevent potential confusion if all topic subdivisions are demanded at once. For now, they see the main outline divisions (visual), are told what to do (auditory), and copy (kinesthetic) their statements opposite the appropriate paragraph entry. Once they become familiar with the *idea* of organization, more refinements can be made in classifications and outlines (see pp. 39-41), as they restructure their data. Len's experience in restructuring the same information three times on the outline form follows.

Name: Len

✓ First assignment ___ Second assignment ___ Third assignment

OUTLINE

Title of essay: a nature walk in the woods

(Introduction) Thesis: (of the talk) of days many different kinds of things

(What is it you want to say, what point do you want to make?)

(Paragraph) I. The woods is a nice place for most people to go out and hike.
A. Camping.
B. to see all different animals and flowers.

(Paragraph) II. Thing that are in the woods.
A. dirt, rocks, leafs, trees, stumps and bushes.

(Paragraph) III. Many things that I saw in the woods that came from a house.
A old T.V, rugs, Brush, paper, phone Book, mattress

(Paragraph) IV. Things I like for an automobile
A. Canopy, oil cans, tires, paint cans and anything oil

(Paragraph) V. Things that most people eat and drink
A. Olypic Beer, Rainer Beer, orsiers, bread and
B. a Potato chips

Name: Len

___ First assignment ✓ Second assignment ___ Third assignment

OUTLINE

Title of essay: an autumn walk in the woods

(Introduction) Thesis: _____

(What is it you want to say, what point do you want to make?)

(Paragraph) I. Things that came from cars

A. Paint cans, oil cans, mystery oil, Beer cans.

(Paragraph) II. Things that come from man

A. Rag, towels, Pelows, tire brakes

(Paragraph) III. Things that are hard

A. tire, rock, Bricks, house Ironmans Salt, metal

(Paragraph) IV. Things that came from Plastic.

A. Vitquins, Pool, head Phone, old T.V.

(Paragraph) V. Things that came from wood

A. Paper, News Paper, Plywood, Phone Book, cups.

toilet paper

Name: Len

___ First assignment ___ Second assignment ✓ Third assignment

OUTLINE

Title of essay: an autumn walk in the woods.

(Introduction) Thesis: I saw many things smooth, rough, rainy, noisy, crumple.

(What is it you want to say, what point do you want to make?)

(Paragraph) I. Things that are smooth

A. Metal, Plastic, Phone Book, Pelows, towels, canopy.

(Paragraph) II. Things that are rough

A. stumps, Bricks, ars salt, tire, rock

(Paragraph) III. Things that are rainy

A. Mystery oil, Paint cans, transmission fluid, Light ter fluid

(Paragraph) IV. Things that are noicy

A. Phil, toilet, head Phone, old T.V., Scott, Dave

(Paragraph) V. Things you can crumple.

A. beer cans, Bush, Potato chips, twigs, oil cans.

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Judy and Brenda, on the second and third tries, are able to see sub-category relationships, and these are entered on another outline form within the "Sample outline format" box. This information can then be inserted into a paragraph when the draft is written.

Name: Judy

___ First assignment ✓ Second assignment ___ Third assignment

OUTLINE

Title of essay: _____

(Introduction) Thesis: _____

(What is it you want to say, what point do you want to make?)

Sample outline format

I.
A.
1.
2.
B.
1.
2.

(Paragraph) I.

A.

(Paragraph) II.

A.

(Paragraph) III.

A.

(Paragraph) IV.

A.

(Paragraph) V.

A.

Name: Brenda

___ First assignment ___ Second assignment ✓ Third assignment

OUTLINE

Title of essay:

(Introduction) Thesis:

(What is it you want to say, what point do you want to make?)

Sample outline format

I.
A.
1.
2.
B.
1.
2.

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(Paragraph) I. Things you find looking at nature

A. dirt, leaves, rocks, sticker bush, berries, pine cone, sticks, branch, ditch, grass, weeds,

(Paragraph) II. Things people eat and drink with; and use

A. paper cups, snow cup, Wendys cup, K-Mart cup milk carton, plastic cups, straws, hair cans, Remington bottle, Downie bag, apple, sandwich bags, Kentucky fried chicken box, plastic spoon.

(Paragraph) III. Things people wear.

A. pants, shirt, underwear, gloves, socks, holly shoes.

(Paragraph) IV. Thing you may find made out of paper

A. cigarette wrappers, cardboard boxes, toilet paper, newspapers, books, matchbox, bug pens

Sally, my foreign student, tries to participate as best as she is able. However, she rarely speaks, seldom contributes to class discussions, and beyond the most obvious imitative activities, I am never sure how much she comprehends. See sample of the outline she completed with much assistance:

Name: Sally

X First assignment ___ Second assignment ___ Third assignment

OUTLINE

Title of essay: ~~an outdoor walk in the woods~~

(Introduction) Thesis: _____

(What is it you want to say, what point do you want to make?)

Sample outline format

I.
- A.
  1.
  2.
- B.
  1.
  2.

(Paragraph) I. I found many things that in a tree.

A. trees, Douglas fir, grass, bush, white oak.

(Paragraph) II. Are would found many things that go in a flowers.

A. Straw, Daisy, Rose, marigold, ginko, Pansy, Balsom, Tulip.

(Paragraph) III. There are many thing that go in a house.

A. rugs, couch, chairs, blaant bed.

(Paragraph) IV. Thing that go in a car.

A. lights, oil can, cars, machen.

I am mindful of Roger Sale's comment on making outlines:

Outline makers can delude themselves into thinking they have done something they have not yet done, whereas the writer

> who just starts in and keeps asking himself how things go together is less likely to be under any illusion about what he has and hasn't done. (*On Writing*, p. 84)

Perhaps the fluid clustering and classifying activity before outlining will mitigate to some degree the negative constraints of outline making. The procedure of teaching-reteaching-reinforcement of a single concept (the outline), is an extension of the previously mentioned "tell them, show them, let them do, show them again, bit-by-small bit" approach.

At this point the prewriting process is largely completed. We have taken a topic, "An Autumn Walk in the Woods," gathered ideas on it, found common patterns among the nearly overwhelming mass of data, taken that data and organized it into general categories and paragraphs, and are now ready to begin drafting introductions. Another of Sale's admonitions comes to mind: "Perhaps nowhere is the tendency of rules to countermand reason more prevalent than in the writing of introductions and conclusions....The best advice to writers about introductions is never to start with one." (p. 91) We therefore write introductions and conclusions last—and it makes good sense. Now we *know* what to introduce and proceed accordingly. I place the following pattern on the board for our first introduction:

An Autumn Walk in the Woods

What would you or other people think when someone says he went for a walk in the woods?	Most people _____ _____ _____ _____	Funnel Introduction General to Specific thesis

We discuss that the connotation of "an autumn walk in the woods" would suggest the clean, heavily-wooded beauty of our Pacific Northwest. They contrast this impression with their recent Goat Farm walk and note it was not clean and pleasant because of all the junk observed. I am working into the idea of a thesis statement by leading them to observe that their walk in the woods was very different. I'll suggest the thesis be included as the last statement in the introductory paragraph in accordance with the "funnel" model introduced on the transparency of "Man's Greatest Victory" (p. 13 above).

Designing an introductory paragraph is another new skill. However, I resist the temptation to circulate and give them assistance. They can see the pattern on the front board and if they are to be helped, they must learn to help themselves. I sit behind my desk to observe what will happen. Not much happens at first, at least on the surface. Don can't

get started, and falls into his old pattern of non-stop talking to Ron and Jim. I remind them to get busy. For a few minutes all is quiet. Soon conversation is buzzing again, but with a difference. As I now circulate, all refuse help and are busily crafting introductions better than the "starter" samples I have given them.

Cathy suddenly asks a very surprising question. "Mr. Marik, can I put a period at the end of a sentence?" This junior, after eleven years in our educational system, is not sure if it is all right to place a period at the end of a sentence. Her question is more revealing than puzzling. She is also in my third period U.S. History class and every day orally reads sentences from the text in our reading circle. She *knows* sentences have periods after them, but only in the context of her own *writing* efforts does the function of punctuation become important—and apparent. Should I be dismayed that at this late stage in her education she is asking such elementary questions? Perhaps, but more importantly she is beginning to ask the right questions. When she also asks, "How does this sound?" I read aloud her sentence and our sensitivities bend into the words as we listen and discuss what she wanted to say. Generalized "How does this sound?" questions generate opportunities to consider other rhetorical options and refinements of intended meaning. The challenge here is to craft the answer to her question in such a way that she understands it at the level of her developing conceptual ability. Perhaps the most significant contribution a teacher can make at this point in the drafting/revising stage is an appropriate answer, followed by a question that does not demand cognitive skills several levels higher than suggested by the original problem. Cathy will later astound me with her answers when I incrementally move her into higher-level cognitive questions requiring perceiving relationships between dissimilar objects.

I reflect: part of the problem in teaching special education students is that they are not long on Socratic dialogue and have limited patience with involved explanations and questions. Thus conversation must be brief, accurate, and to the point. It seems they would rather *do* a dimly-understood assignment and discover afterward what the non-handicapped student learns by carefully listening to a comprehensive explanation before doing an assignment. This is a backward system, but one that seems to hold their interest. Hence, some lessons can be likened to driving mostly in reverse gear for an hour. We end this activity by writing funnel introductions:

Ron:

Most people would tell you about how nice it is in the woods. My experience was quite different.

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Brenda:

Most people would think an autumn walk in the woods would be nice quit, peaceful, away from their problems, but most people don't take an autumn walk in the woods. Like I did at Abraham high school the other day.

Don:

Most people say when they go thrugh the woods they see it has be kept up very good.
Why I went thrugh the woods, I saw things that came from a car like cans, old cars, fabric, carpets, tires and rugs. It's making the woods look like a dump.

Len:

The woods is a very nice place for most people to go out and relax aroud a camp fire. Then when the sun is coming up that is when most people go for a autumn walk in the woods. They see all different kinds of animals and flowers But on my autumn walk I seen many different kind of things.

Sally:

An would found many things that go in a flowers Thing that go in a corn I found many thing that in a Trees Tree are many things that go in a house

These introductions are added to the previously organized material and the entire effort set into a piece of writing. (See samples below, pp. 54-61.)

Adjectives

We are ready to move into the study of adjectives to sharpen observation and descriptive powers. We head into the Goat Farm for another trip. Each student is given a brown paper sandwich bag. The assignment:

> Collect as many *different* items as you can. For example, do not fill the bags with leaves, for that is only one kind of item. You may choose a leaf, twig, pine cone, bottle cap, cigarette butt, paper cup, etc. You may take the remainder of the period, or come back in ten minutes. One caution: do not bring back anything that moves—no slugs, worms, spiders, bugs, or anything that has been living such as that dead rat that you saw last week. We may have these items in the classroom for a week or two and you wouldn't want to reach into your bag and pull out a slimy, gooey, sticky, smelly, half decayed slug or worm. (This is demonstrated in front of the classroom with a paper bag, with appropriate facial expressions of repugnance). The class groans and the point is made. One more reminder: No dog dung or anything else that animals may have dropped or disgorged along the way!

Don snaps the fingers of his right hand and says, "Oh, darn!" in mock disappointment.

Len leans over and clarifies my instructions: "Yeah, Don, no dog shit!"

They all leave and, as I have been this day cursed by the fickle rain god of the Pacific Northwest skies, return looking as if they have stood inside the Elephant Car Wash for the last thirty minutes. "This is the grossest thing I've ever done!" says Ron. "I can hardly wait for the next assignment!"

I respond, "I knew you would *love* it!" At some indeterminate moment during these past months, the black cloak of sadness and despair has slipped from Ron's shoulders and revealed a soul with both humor and wit. His walk is lighter, he is more animated in conversation, and has the knack of summarizing how absurd some of our composition activity appears. I welcome his comments, and we try to out-do one another with "one liners."

Objects collected are dumped from the paper bags onto the desk tops and spread out. We have a "spelling lesson" as they list everything collected on a separate sheet of paper. They interact with each other, asking questions like, "How do you spell 'styrofoam'?"

Len asks, "What do you call this, Mr. Marik?"

"What does it look like?"

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"I dunno."

"Let's ask someone else."

"OK. Hey Ron, what is this thing?"

"Well, it looks like a marble." Ron examines it closely. "But it ain't made of glass—lessee, it ain't no berry—wait, I got it! It's a old gum ball, you know, a jaw breaker!"

"How do you spell it?"

"Uh, g-u-m, b...."

"OK. I got it!"

And so it goes, interacting, spelling, identifying, writing, listening, and counting the items collected, as they are now placed in clean paper bags with students' names on them and stored in the back of the room. Len, not the most capable student nor the best writer, is the clear quantity winner, with forty-six items collected. He asks Ron to write them down for him, "Cause my spelling ain't so good." Ron writes:

1 Quarter Pounder
2 rock
3 rag
4 fern
5 roller
6 stick
7 " er brush
8 foam (rug)
9 stuffing
10 water
11 cup
12 spring
13 gum wrapper
14 gum paper
15 mud
16 spark plugs end
17 nkn
18 K krazy glue
19 tree seed
20 12 gage
21 mustard band
22 pine cone
23 celery tie
24 newspaper
25 can
26 straw
27 leg
28 apple
29 shingle
30 matches
31 spoon
32 cement
33 beer cap
34 rope
35 cup
36 mattress rag
37 beer bottle
38 cigarette butt
39 flower pot
40 plastic bag
41 cardboard
42 magazine
43 order forms
44 sponge
45 board
46 water bag

Before continuing our study of adjectives, I review what we have learned about grammar and ask whether anyone remembers what part of speech we studied when we placed the names of things in categories. All are puzzled for a moment, but when I say, "prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, nouns, conjunctions..." they pounce on "nouns." I make a note to draw a tighter connection between grammar terms and what we are doing, yet I can't be convinced this is really very important.

We begin our work on adjectives. Each has his or her bag of "goodies" and selects one thing to talk about. Len selects a marble-sized piece of hard mud from his bag, and the class decides they would like to work with this item. I place this word on the board, using the "Attributing" format created by Jim Sabol.

Names (Nouns)	Attributes (Adjectives) Qualities
Mud	

The chunk of mud is passed from student to student and each must tell at least one word that describes it. I place these words on the board, in addition to others generated by this activity:

Names (Nouns)	Attributes (Adjectives) Qualities
Mud	messy, hard, soft, heavy, brown, lumpy, wet, squishable, little, rocky, sandy, weedy, gritty

Interestingly, Paul is able to respond quickly with opposites: Len: "hard," Don: "soft," Jim: "smooth," Don: "rough." Members of the class remind Don that it has to be one or the other. Don responds that it could be both, hard now, soft when wet; smooth when wet but rough and dried now. An interesting analysis, but they don't buy it. He returns to analyzing what is placed before him. We proceed with three other items—grass, comb, and Fritos bag—as a class activity, mainly as a warm-up for the next assignment. Occasionally I select an item from a student (in this case a ball of dried grass), and say, "I'm looking for a word which begins with 's' that describes another quality of this item." The small bunch of grass is compressed and expanded quickly. Don says "bouncy." Judy responds, "It doesn't start with 's,' you dodo!" Finally Jim says "springy."

While this exchange is going on, Paul comes up, holds the grass between his hands, and intently examines the movement. Right after the "springy" answer, he says "squishable." Right on, Paul! The group activity ends with this information on the board:

Names (Nouns)	Attributes (Adjectives) Qualities
Mud	messy, hard, soft, heavy, brown, lumpy, wet, squishable, little, rocky, sandy, weedy, gritty.
Grass	green, brown, yellow, golden, dirty, long, dry, dead, hairy, rooty, ugly, thin, crunched up, smooth, rough, springy.
Comb	black, toothy, rectangular, bendable, soft, smooth, noisy, nerve wracking, thin, crooked, warped, dirty, trademark.
Fritos bag	empty, noisy, dirty, light, ripped, shiny, plastic, orange, white, red, black, nameful, bunched, purple, thin, square, straight lines, crispy sound, crunched, smooth.
Tennis shoes	stinks, holey, wet, soggy, dirty, ripped, torn, red, white, grass on it—and pine needles, rubber bottom, size two, shoestring, eyelids, muddy, soft, fingernail polish on it, foot odor, red stripes, heavy.
Wax paper cup	printing on it, small, advertisement, flat, dirty, crumpled, holes, coke, grass, spiderwebs, bugs, lighter than tennis shoe, smashed tip.
Sock	dirty, stinks like dead rats, ripped, stretched out, soggy, drippy, heavy, mud, orange, blue, yellow point, bleached white spot, holes, gray, long, threads.

They finish the assignment by making sentences from the information on the board. I ask Don to look at the randomly clustered words and see if there are any which seem to go together (classifying for rhetorical effect). He scans the list adjacent to "Mud" and suggests that "hard" and "lumpy" may go together, and "sandy" and "gritty" should be grouped. I suggest others in the class try to find similar relationships as they arrange their sentences for maximum effect. This activity suggests they become sensitized to seeing patterns, order, strengths and moods of words. Don makes this grouping:

I found some green grass in rem
part it was brown, yellow and golden.
It was dirty and ~~dug~~ it had dead
roots. It was ugly and thin. It
was hairy and springy

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A sample from Jim's work:

Mud

When I went threw the goat farm I found a piece of mud that was hard, heavy, brown, and lumpy.

A sample of Len's effort:

I was in the goat farm and seen same grass. It was golden brown, had a little yellow in it. It was smooth, and springy.

Ron, our class wit, looks around the room and seeing all the garbage says, "This class should be condemned by the board of health." I think maybe he is right! After all have written three or four short sentences, this information is placed in a longer paragraph form. See Judy's efforts below:

The Holy tennis shoe

I saw a red + white tennis shoe with a red stripe down the middle of it. It was holy wet. soggy + muddy + had part on that stands just like my brother went he take his shoe off. The shoelaces were white but they got every dirt + muddy so they were a dark gray. There was grass + pine needles on the rubber bottom side + had finger nail polish on the upper side of the shoe. The shoe must have belong to a little boy because the size of the shoes was size two.

The wax paper cup

I saw a crumpled up wax paper cup that said K-mart in the middle of the cup. It also had advertisement on the bottom line of the cup. The cup looks like it was sitting outside of a long time because it had holes + it was very dirt out side. in the inside. It had coke. spider web. bugs + also grass.

The next assignment requires them to replicate group sentence paragraph-building activity by using their own objects:

> Take four items from your sack, name them, and write all the describing words you can think of opposite the names. Use the same procedure we have just done as a group, and place your adjectives or describing words on the ditto provided.

I want them to take the items, one-by-one, and work on as many descriptions as possible before going on to the next one. For the visual dyslexic or distractable student, the fewer the options, the more focused the response. However, they all haul out four items because of my incomplete instructions, and place them toward the top part of the desk, interestingly in the same spatial position of the topic sentence strips worked on two weeks ago. They readily dive in with the same peppered exclamations and questions that characterized our group work. The transition is going smoothly. Ideas are now generated at the individual level, and what again bubbles to the surface is their intense desire to know how to spell the words they are trying to write. These same kids would not likely study a spelling list, and would show minimal interest in textbook spelling lessons. Yet here they are, eagerly wanting to know how to spell words—words from their own familiar vocabulary. These short activities, up to this point, come as close to purposeful writing as possible in a lesson, by connecting immediate problem with immediate solution. They want to push on with their own exciting discovery process and ask, "What are we going to do with these words?" Imagine, an excitement about what we are going to do with words—every language arts teacher's dream. Anne Gere notes

> As we create occasions for writing, we urge students to work purposefully, to find the means to accomplish the ends they have in mind. We offer such encouragement because we know that students are most successful when they make a writing task their own by investing our assignment with their communication intention. ("Written Composition: Toward a Theory of Evaluation," p. 45)

Midway through this activity, to help Cathy describe a clear piece of bottle glass, I ask, "What do you call a surface that is 'rounded down' or depressed like this?" She does not know. I say, "Concave."

She says, "I never heard of that word. How do you spell it?"

"*C-o-n-c-a-v-e-*."

She writes it down inaccurately. I point this out. She corrects it later but for now she wants to press on. I turn the bottle glass over and show her the "rounded out" side. I ask, "What do you call a surface that bulges outward like this?" I spell the word *convex* and she copies it down.

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She continues working on her descriptions (see sample), as I circulate to help others.

Naming	Attributing
plastic spoon	Dritey, Broken, Little, Scrug, stratford oval, plastic and it not glass white
glass	Smoth, Ruff, Sno, Thin, Convcavede convex Bray high sance pitch. Transparent
comb	Black, Theeth, bendable, Nails Plastic gums, Dritey
Soap	Round, Smoth white, orrey, green Pruffle, Cost 59¢, milky, paint Soap

Jim, who sits across from Cathy, overhears our conversation. When I come near his desk, he requests help. His problem concerns describing a collapsed aluminum beer can. He has written "sharp edges," then stopped because he couldn't think of any more qualities. I ask, "What is this can made of?" He writes "Thin aluminum." I turn the can bottom-side up and ask, "What do we call a surface which dips down or rounds down like this one?"

He immediately responds "*concave.*" I am delighted. What an easy way to build vocabulary. (See sample of his paper):

Naming	Attributing
Juice Lide	green, white, orange, purple, round, light, dirty, Flat top, Soft, letters, small, metale, paint
Spool	white, black, round, hole, letters, rectangle, light, Soft
pen lide	green, white, brown, plastic, tin, round top, rectangle, soft,

Beer can	white, black, blue, gray, letters,
	bull, squashed, light, soft,
	sharp edges, thin aluminum
	concaved bottom, round top

Two more interesting events take place in this lesson. Cathy wants help again. I take the piece of glass and drop it several times on her desk. "What other qualities does it have?"

"It makes a noise."

"Is it a noise like a drum?"

"No."

"What does it sound like?" (I drop it several more times.)

"I dunno, like a noise." (She insists the word noise is adequate.)

I reach over and get Jim's squashed beer can and alternately drop the can and the glass, asking, "Do these make the same noise?"

"No."

"Now listen carefully. I know you sing in the choir. Think of all the different kids who sing with you, and their range of voices. What range is your voice?" (I am trying to have her say a high sound—noise—as compared with a lower sound.)

"Soprano."

"Can you describe what noise this glass makes, based on your experience in choir?" She nearly floors me with her answer.

"It sounds like the end of a piano."

"You mean a piano key?"

"Yes."

"Which end?"

"The one that makes the high sounds."

"What are those high sounds called?" She doesn't know so I finally tell her, "high-pitched sounds." Cathy has made an extraordinary connection, because if a small piece of bottle glass is dropped on a hard surface, it *does* sound like the quick "plink" of a piano key at the high end of the keyboard. We also make the connection between her piece of glass and the classroom window: *transparent.*

I decide to push her into a higher cognitive level involving seeing relationships, and ask a final question as she looks at her piece of glass:

"Jim has an object on his desk that may be related to an object you have on your desk. Can you see a possible relationship between the two items?"

She scans Jim's items, looks at hers, back and forth for about thirty seconds, wrinkles her brow, then slowly, choosing her words very carefully, says, "Well, Jim has a metal orangeade bottle cap that could of been on a glass bottle." Then she excitedly exclaims, "Glass just like *I* have!"

Sounds, sights, analogies, metaphors and relationships, all from a girl who is "special ed." and whose handwriting looks like a drunk chicken with muddy feet has staggered across her paper. Sometimes I am too quick to generalize about limited academic abilities when writing does not appear to come up to "standard." Perhaps part of this negative judgment is from years ago when I got trapped into the extensive diagnostic testing scheme which tracked students into individually-designed lessons keyed only to their disabilities. As a result, I (and most probably these students) came to believe they were so disabled that none could describe, write, or think beyond the most basic remedial levels I had programmed them to work in. I never gave them a chance to make decisions and become excited about a piece of work they could feel was uniquely their own creation.

Summary

From their clipboard lists, students have generated sentences and then paragraphs in the same pattern as the "first house" essays. That is, when students numbered various rooms on the house floor plan, they wrote sentences describing activities common to each item numbered, and ended with short paragraphs and an essay using these sentences. Now they are doing the same basic activity, except they are using items lettered and identified as paragraphs on an outline form, using information from their autumn walk observation, but still within an experiential framework. The sequence of assignments is headed in this direction:

1. Experiences from early life within the home, with mom, pop, sis, grandma, grandpa, as a focal point for information (First House).
2. Experiences outside their family, but still within a direct experience boundary (An Autumn Walk).
3. Experiences from which to make value judgments on social/environmental problems (Goat Farm Pollution).
4. Pictures from which to make character sketches, moving to more abstract levels outside their direct experience (Picture a Story).
5. Movement into higher levels of abstraction, by working with expository and other writing forms on subjects of their choice. For

example: one murder mystery, one account of the killing of a much-loved cat by neighborhood "punks," customizing a 1955 Ford pickup truck (see pp. 117-128), television commercial analysis, and other selected subjects.

Samples of Essays

Don:

Language art
October 18, 1980

an autumn walk
in the woods

Most people say when they go through the woods they see it has been kept up very good.

When I went through the woods, I saw things that came from a car like crome, old cars, fibers, carpets, tires and rugs, also making the woods look like a dump.

People through paper products in the goat farm. I found some Matches, packs of empty cigarets boxes, garbage, letters and some paper bag that was used in a 7-11 store. Some old newspaper and milk cartons, boxes, tires.

It is full of Junk food like metal cans, fruit Juice cans, bodels of pop can heads that should not be in their it should be in garbish cans not on the goat farm.

I found some house parts like plaster, rugs, bed frame, bed springs, couches, tvs, gradan hose gutters, glass, steps, latter, wire fences, toilet paper, broking couch leg and

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door frame.

I found some plastic tubing some straws, plastic bag plastic siding, plastic lids, plastic bags, and some pails and from a car.

There were some head lights cars seams, fan mirrors, mapes, car mats, oil filter, auto fenz car gear and tires.

There were some broken branches, dirt, grass, trees, there pushes, rakes, cement, weeds, pincons, stowns, leafs and log crap

Len:

S.A. 10A
10/27/80

An Autumn Walk in the woods

The woods is a very nice place for most people to go out and relex around a camp fire. Then when the sun is coming up That is when most people go for a autumn walk in the woods. They see all defferent kinds of animals and flowers. But on my autumn walk I seen many different kind of things.

Things that is in the woods When I walk in the woods I see dart, roches, leafs, trees, stumps and bushes. That is what I see when I walk in the woods. The woods is very beautiful place if it is kept up.

Many thing that I seen

in the woods that came from a house like. old t.v. rugs. bucks, paper, phone book. matress and insulation. that is some of the thongs that cl seen in the woods.

Thangs I seen for an automolibes cl seen an comapy. oil cans. tires. paint cans and mystery oil. thare was alot more but thay dont relly go with cars.

Thangs that most people eat and drink wrappers. Thare was Olympia beer, Rainer beer. Coor beer clycos and BQ potato chips wrappers.

Thate is what my autumn walk in the woods was all about.

Brenda:

Language Art, 12-4
October 23, 1980

An Autumn walk in the woods

Most people would think an autumn walk in the woods would be nice, quit, peaceful, away from their problems, but most people dont take an autumn walk in the woods. like cl did at ingraham high school the other day. cl started out looking at nature as cl was walking over the dirt and thrugh the leaves, tripped over a rock, and stuck myself with a sticker bush with berries on it, as cl walked alittle further a branch fell out of a tree with a pine cone on it it landed in a ditch with grass and weeds knee high, meanwhile cl was collecting wood with familar shapes and cl tripped over a brick.

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As I walk alittle further I came across an opened area familar to a picnic area. At first I saw a few candy rappers for example I saw milk duds, three musk rappers set..., As I walked on I found paper cups for example I ran into a A+W cup, Wendy's cup, a K-Mart cup, and a milk carton as I walked on I ran into a couple plastic cups and straws while looking ahead I saw some beer cans for example I saw a ramier bottles, further along I ran into a Donato Bag an apple, sandwich bags at which time I came along a Kentuchy fried chicken box with a plastic spoon inside.

As I walked further on I tripped over a rock and fell into a pile of old clothes for example after falling into the pile of old clothes I shuffled through the pile and found one pare of pants, a shirt, a pare of underware, a pair of glovs, a duty pair of socks and some old holly shoes.

After looking threw the pile of old clothes I continued to walk on I was almost threw with my nature walk I spotted a bunch of cigarette rappers and cardboard boxes along with toilet paper, and newspapers, the closes I came from finishing my nature walk I found books and torn up notebooks and as I was walking out of the woods not to far from a bus stop I found a used bus pass.

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Jim:

Language Arts II-A
October 27, 1980

An autom walk in the woods

Some people think that we would have went threw woods with trees, bushes, and grass and some peaceful stuff.

When I went on a autom walk in the woods we found thing that are in nature like pine cones, Rocks, grass, Bushes, dead leaves, stumps, Trees, and dirt.

I also found thing that are plastic like a number plate, funnel, poped raft, Flower pots, plastic boxes, green machine, Fantastic bottle, too.

I also found thing that are in a house like a broom, coat, clothes, paint brushesh, head phones, basket, purple rug, baby cribe, Step ladder, Door frame, gutters, and a wire fence too.

I also found thing that are paper like news paper, mapes, toilet paper, Ciggaret boxes, and paper bags, too

I also found things that go with a car like car tires, car crome, head lights, car mat, car rims, and oil filters, too.

I also found thing that cortaine something like a notebook, popcorns, Shopping cart, coffe cans, milk carton and a spray can too.

Thats all I found.

Ron:

Language Arts 10-A
October 23, 1980

An Autumn walk in the woods.

Most people would tell you about how nice it is in the woods. My experience was quite different.

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I found a lot of things, like we saw a lot things that belong in a house. We saw wire fencing, shopping carts with junk food wrappers all over the place. There was toilet paper all over the place. We found a busted bed but all that was left was the bed springs. There was an old wet couch and a few boxes scattered here and there. There was also a couple of bikes laying around and a whole lot of cement chunks laying around. There were ceiling tiles laying around all over the place and a metal pipe buried in the grass. Next I saw a magazine in the dirt. There was purple strands of a rug all over over the place. There were two wooden posts buried in some grass next to some more busted ceiling tile. There was a busted mirror right in our path, so we walked over it. We saw a lot of busted up wood siding.

I also found some things made of plastic. I saw plastic coke bottles a few feet away from it. I saw an old mold hose. I saw a split straw that was in a styrofoam cup. I also saw an old plastic bag. I saw some broken plastic bowls too.

I found a few things that contain something. I saw a baggie that had water in it. Then a couple of feet away from the baggie I saw a cardboard beer carton. It was pretty soggie and it was yellow gourd. By the edge of the woods I saw a bundle of newspaper. The date of it was November 12, 1978. Then I walked for a few more feet I saw a hooked up looking notebook that some disgustable young fool, spilled the notebooks guts. By the paper stack, I saw a busted burger box. I also found a cracked beer bottle. I saw some empty spray cans, God knows what happened to the paint. Across the woods I saw two basket carts with empty candy and potato chip wrappers around it.

I saw old car parts and accessories. I saw a car mats and some old oil filters. I saw old broken window glass and a busted head light and some old slashed tires.

I also saw some old clothes. I saw an old moldy coat and a tee shirt and a pair of pants.

Cathy:

J. A11-1
October 24, 1980

an autumn walk in the woods

Most people think that a walk thrugh the woods is beautyful. Their are pretty green bush. Tree that are over a 100 years old. Their are flowers that are so beautiful people would like to pick them. Their are flowers such as daffdills, daisys, and butter cups.

On my autumn walk I saw many things that are nature things. Tree stumps, green grassy, plywood, Devil, crumpled dry leafs,

Their are many defent household items Broom toilet paper, a purple ring, T.V. sets, a bedbunk a couch, mattress, and insulation,

I never had so much garbage before in a long like a gas pump. Large plumbing can we have big mac books, popcorn, glass, beer bottles, bar Books medicated milk Duds, garbe bags plastic

many defferent school items such paint brush, pichers, mops, muzy book, paper,

Their are many elevated plate for a car bumb plate, oil filters, hand bible, car sets, Number plate,

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As I had anticipated, teaching Sally was not only a challenge, but a problem. I made many attempts to communicate with her. I called my sister, who was fluent in her language, and over the phone we tried to help Sally understand what was expected in class. Later Sally's sister, who was fluent in English, came to school, and again I attempted to explain classroom assignments. Still later her father and mother came to school, and through the sister's translation I learned that Sally had had considerable problems in her native language before coming to this country. Thus she would undoubtedly have had learning problems even in her own country. With the handicap of trying to learn of foreign language in addition to composition skills, deal with high expectations for performance from a talented and successful family, coupled with a sometimes stubborn refusal to even try some parts of an assignment, Sally made little progress (see her essay).

an Saturday walk in the woods

Are would found many things that go in a flowers Thing that go in a cars I found many thing that in a Trees Tree are many things that go in a house.

Are would found many things that go in a flowers stawpia, Daisy, Rose, marigolds, ginger, Pansy, Balcaon, Tulip.

I found many things that in a tree trees, Douglas fir, grass, bush, white ash.

There are many things that go in a house rugs, couch, chairs, bleack bd.

Thing that go in a car lights, oil can, cars, machin.

In trying to find some area in which Sally could succeed, I asked her sister what she liked to do. "Watch TV" was the answer. I suggested she make a daily log of what she does at home and describe her favorite TV shows as a starting point on which to build some rudimentary composition concepts (see samples).

Saturday afternoon emergency one very good and Ambulance and fire Dept they are help people and starring John - Roy - CAPTAIN - and go to station fire at 19 50th Ave N E, and 10:00 o'clock morning and bigger cars station fire and Just looking for car finish words.

I like yesterday in the house watch T.V. and Last night story movies and love story and go to out side. table - kitchen. This morning go to school every day I am finish my words.

This worked for a few weeks. Thereafter, Sally stopped writing anything and sat passively in class, watching us, almost as if we were extensions of her nighttime TV hour. More conversations with her, translations from her sister and parents, notes home and telephone calls changed nothing. Ultimately I recommended a vocational program for her and more time in ESL classes before attempting to learn composition skills.

I do not feel particularly relieved by Sally's departure. I want to know why what I tried did not work for her. One problem is that I do not know why what I do is effective with some mentally retarded students but not others or is effective with some students of normal intelligence but not others. I suspect that I.Q. test scores do not have much to do with students learning the writing skills I teach. Perhaps I need to look at some students in terms of a possible arrested developmental/thinking stage similar to the cognitive levels that Piaget and others have described. Is there a minimum "thought structure" potential that should be identified as a basic prerequisite, essential to success in composing activities? A higher level of conceptual ability can be presumed as necessary for a student to perceive relationships in the composing process, but if the student does not have this ability, teaching a skill that requires a higher level of sophisticated thinking may be an inefficient and non-justified use of instructional time. There is no question that it is terribly unfair to students like Sally and Paul. But what of Cathy? She was originally very negative, disruptive, and operating on a low conceptual level. Yet, while engaged in the composing process, she made some higher conceptual connections between data, and while struggling through a devastating emotional experience (see pp. 131-133), produced a six thousand word piece of fiction. Was her writing (thinking) growth a chance happening, or was the writing *process* somehow responsible for her movement into higher levels of analysis and abstraction? Maybe beyond her roughly-hewn product, and the efforts of Don and others, there is an eloquence, a voice that, despite lack of "provable" pretest/posttest statistics, speaks to a greater truth about the composing process. Perhaps it wants to say that despite an appearance of limited cognitive abilities, most *can* think on higher levels if someone would but light the candle and show them a way out of an academic lifetime of composing darkness. But what of the torch bearer, the teacher? I have a strong feeling that the final essays of which we are so proud are insignificant when compared with the writing *process* used to create the

final products, a curious contradiction in a discipline already cursed with an almost destructive abundance of conflicting practices. In any event, given the current school population mixture of those who in years past were institutionalized and now appear in our regular and special classes, the large influx of foreign students, some without any academic schooling, the negative influence of illegal drugs on brain growth and function, the unknown cumulative effects of thousands of hours of passive television viewing at early formative and later impressionable ages, it is imperative that we learn more about the cognitive functioning ability of our students as they are asked to absorb new, specialized knowledge. I do not hear any chorus of concern on this issue from any corner of educational leadership, but I do not see how today we can gain much instructional insight from the same type of two- and three-digit I.Q. test score entries that have appeared essentially unchanged in student folders for the past fifty years.

For the moment, I am "guessing" that excellent writing techniques will be most successful when realistically matched with the conceptual abilities of special education students. I do not know how these abilities can be determined prior to composition work, but perhaps a precomposition test can be designed that would determine to what degree certain cognitive abilities are related to the success or failure of certain composing tasks. I need to find specific indicators within test scores and ability groups which may have relevance to the success or failure of certain composing activities. I need to know how my students *think*, how they put things together and what they will likely be successful in doing. Unfortunately, the current test scores of Sally and others lead me to believe there is much they can't do, and school records detail everything they have failed in. The collection of this negative kind of data seems to be a backward way for educators to be looking at kids.

IV

The Goat Farm

The expository writing assignment on the Goat Farm pollution problem is introduced on dittoed sheets:

THE EXPOSITORY WRITING ASSIGNMENT

You have been for a walk in the Goat Farm, and have made many observations as to the amount of garbage there. This wooded area is not school property and therefore is neither under control of the school principal nor a part of Ingraham High School. Yet, many Ingraham students have made this place a mess. Do you believe anything can or should be done to preserve, clean up, or beautify this area?

Write an essay to the principal describing this problem and your own comment on whether anything can or should be done to correct it. In your essay, be sure to have an introduction (which includes a thesis statement), several paragraphs (which include topic sentences that summarize the facts you present for your comments), and a conclusion.

Regard this assignment as a major part of your grade thus far. Along with your essay, turn in evidence that you classified information into common groups and checked your organization by making an outline before you wrote the final draft.

The principle used here is an example of small bit-by-bit methodology mentioned in Chapter Two. The bulk of the material needed to complete this assignment has already been used in the straight descriptive piece, "An Autumn Walk in the Woods." This assignment is designed to encourage students to see relationships between the current assignment and past work on this same subject. Collected data need only be reclassified (similar to the three outline classification exercises and board work in Chapter Three) to meet the present requirement of commenting on the Goat Farm as an example of environmental pollution and recommending a solution—if the student believes a solution exists. Judy does

not believe anything could be done about the problem, but her opinion is not shared by others in the class. I hope to move smoothly into transactional writing, but what seems so sensible and logical ends up fairly frustrating.

The assignment is discussed in relation to previous work. After I explain the dittoed sheet in more detail, they are curiously uninterested in getting started. I don't know if they cannot see the relationship between this task and earlier work, or don't understand what to do. I want to continue giving ideas as I have for nearly two months, but at some point they must learn how to start on their own. Finally, I distribute lined notebook paper and suggest they do a word hoard of potential ideas to support their thesis. The assignment:

> Place your thesis on the top line of this piece of paper. Now list all the arguments, facts, opinions you can think of that will support or prove your thesis.

Len quickly comes to my rescue. "Hey, let's argue about this!" He slides his chair so he is face-to-face with Ron. I suggest Ron take the other side of the issue, and soon the conversation is quite animated. Jim, Don, and some of the others observe. Across the room, Judy and Cathy are in a deep, confidential conversation. Suddenly Len says, "Hey Jim, you take notes. I ain't no good at note taking." Jim "ain't so good either," and refuses, so Ron takes notes while he and Len discuss the issue. As the dialogue progresses, Len starts writing too. More periods of silence as thoughts and comments are copied down. Abruptly, Len snatches Jim's paper and yells, "Hey, lookit here! Jim's been copying down everythin' we said!" He starts to read Jim's paper. Jim is embarrassed. I do not disapprove however, and say he will still have to write it in his own words. At the end of the period Len holds up his paper. He has three-fourths of it written with his side of the argument. Ron has written one-half page. The bell rings ending the period.

This activity has gone reasonably well, but I have no clear idea of how much help to provide next week. Should I have everything tightly organized? I am having difficulty with trust-giving—trust that the students will, when given unstructured time, become excited enough about their own writing to discover possibilities far more relevant to their instant of learning than I could have planned and structured by lists of goals and objectives in a course curriculum. I see the theoretical value in this freedom, but experience tells me it is risky. What if they don't continue writing without my continual guidance? I would consider this situation a failure. I can't ever seem to resolve the trust problem, for even when I plan well, I still have more doubts than plans. Am I the only teacher beset by so much insecurity?

The day after Veteran's Day vacation we return to work on the essay assignment. The atmosphere reminds me of the first day of school in September. None want to work, all want to visit. I want them to start on their own and dip into the silent struggle of writing. I remind them to get busy. A short pause, then more talking. I *do not* want to encourage dependency. I am getting frustrated! What went wrong? Where is the critical breakdown? The period ends with little writing done. Perhaps I should have had more "sharing" time just to release whatever was on their minds. I also notice that when they finally put their minds to the writing task, they try to start with the introduction and then write the entire paper without first organizing the previously written data that, when classified, would suggest a pattern for an introduction. As a result, I will review, using the "stages of writing" transparency (Figure Two, p. 20) on the overhead, and discuss not trying to move from the prewriting stage to the publishing stage in one class period. Although there are probably more composing activities that overlap the stages than stay within the neat categories I've drawn, there are nevertheless enough activities common to each step to justify a reminder about the sequence or process of composition.

I design a slightly more detailed outline form to help them organize their data (see Brenda's sample on the following page) and shift my efforts to individual conferences.

One major writing problem that surfaces in the conferences is run-on sentences. Brenda still does not have a clear idea where the thought ends. I talk her through a sentence, pointing out one subject in the first part and another one in the latter part of the sentence. I ask questions: "Where would you place a period in this group of words? How does this sentence sound?" I read the passage aloud a few more times as she follows along. She generally can find the needed punctuation after hearing and seeing the sentence pattern. Judy, on the other hand, can very quickly spot an error. This is a very dramatic improvement from her confusion during the "first house" assignment when she was fighting all attempts to learn anything about writing. I am trying to resist the temptation to assign textbook exercises on run-ons and other problem areas. I want to feel that I have "fixed" the problem by assigning specific exercises. For example, if they don't know how to spell a word, look in the dictionary and there it is! The problem is solved. If they want to bake a cake and don't know how, then turn to page thirty-seven and there is the recipe. If they don't know how to correct a run-on sentence, turn to page eighty-nine in the workbook, do the exercises, and the problem is solved. Only it isn't. Too often in the past students have done reasonably well on the exercises in the text, then made the same old mistakes in their writing. I decide to keep using their writing as the text,

Outline

Title : Exploring the goat farm

Introduction: (What type?) Exact

THESIS: I believe that the goat farm is not a very clean place and should be cleaned up

I. I took a walk through the goat farm and saw many things

A. mostly things made from paper

1. milk cartons
2. cigarette wrappers

II. The goat farm is a very messy place and should be cleaned up.

A. Things they do in goat farm

1. smoke cigarettes and marijuana
2. drink alcohol

III. Some adults use the goat farm mainly for a place to throw their junk.

A. Clothing found

1. panty
2. shirt

IV. If it was up to me, I have a couple ideas.

A. ideas I came up with

1. build a house
2. clean it up

V. _____

and if we revise it often enough, they might learn editing skills better this way. One major advantage of this approach is that their writing certainly holds their interest.

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Individual conferences produce two surprises: how much help I have to give to some students; how little help I have to give to others. In general, they are beginning to understand: "Provide more detail. Where is the topic sentence? Good thesis statement, now write a funnel introduction." Despite some recurrent problems in getting started, I am at the point where I teach less, they write more, and what they write pursues a thesis statement with more determination. Maria Montessori said something like "Discipline will set you free." I am not exactly sure what that means, but for my little band, they are freer from my continual reminders to include certain fundamentals of formal writing. We now use a common language and terminology, and while there are still miles to go before we put our writing work to rest, at least it has begun to stand up and move forward with some confidence and form and not wallow more in the ditches than on the road.

The "end products" of nearly two and one half months of writing would hardly win prizes. Nevertheless, on the day they are due, I hear an excitement in their voices. Judy, Brenda, Don, and Jim worked on their papers at home the previous night. Don says, "Lookit here, Mr. Marik, three pages! That better be a A!" I comment that it certainly is a very good effort, but I also look for some of the things we studied. He does not respond, but at the end of fifth period world history class he takes his paper out of the box on my desk and asks if I could grade it right now! I feel great pressure to place an "A" on this piece, yet know I probably won't. I don't know how to resolve this problem and feel like some odious creature about to harm its carefully and systematically nourished young.

Evaluation

The Goat Farm paper is, as I told the students in the dittoed assignment, a major part of their grade so far. All have been doing more writing than they have ever done in their lives. How can I place a negative grade on such an achievement? Some teachers do not grade papers and use written evaluations on each major piece to indicate progress. But this clientele doesn't buy it. They are not sophisticated writers and perhaps for this reason ill appreciate long conferences on their writing growth and comments on all the goodness I can find to write about on their papers. They don't pay any more attention to my long written comments about their writing than to *Awk* or *Frag*. Ron says, "How come you wrote all that junk at the end of my paper?" That "junk" is in *praise* of his efforts! Every class in our high school grades student work, and in my class, after I'm through commenting on the good areas or those that need improvement, they push me to the wall and say, "O.K., but what *grade* did I get?" The feeling is they did their job, now it's time for me to do mine. My decision, made years ago and "helped" by these blunt, aggressive, and

occasionally abusive personalities, was to go with the grading system, recognizing there are other options, but none more meaningful to these diamonds in the rough.

Having said that, I'm now ready to contradict myself on my responsibility to grade papers. It is the weekend, and as I look over the culmination of their best efforts, I quickly spot the better ones and a few of lesser quality. It is raining outside, and I don't feel inspired enough to write comments on each paper, mainly because they won't spend more than five seconds glacing at what I've taken a quarter of an hour thinking about and writing down. I know for about two minutes after papers are handed back there will be a flurry of comments exchanged such as, "What grade did you get?"

"I got a *B* (or *D* or whatever)."

Thereafter, interest in their papers will snap shut like the sharp click from a three ring binder. The idea that careful study of how this paper could have been revised to make it better, or comments on what good qualities exist, are routinely ignored. I definitely have a problem focusing their attention on revision. They accept my judgment on an emotional level, and fail to see the intellectual or structural rationale for why a paper received a certain grade. Beach notes:

> The fact that students often do not revise their drafts reflects their inability to effectively evaluate their own writing.
>
> The ability to effectively self-evaluate involves a willingness to be self-critical: to describe and judge one's writing from a detached, non-egocentric perspective and to trust one's own criteria for revising as valid. Because students learn to become dependent on the teacher's evaluation and because they are rarely given assistance in formal, systematic self-evaluation, many students do not develop the ability to critically evaluate their own writing. ("Self-Evaluation Strategies of Extensive Revisers and Nonrevisers," p. 160)

Hence, I won't grade these papers. I'll not do my job. *They* will grade these papers, and in the process perhaps sharpen their own critical evaluation skills and learn something about revision. Here's what I do.

I place a long table in front of the room. On the table I tape three strips of tagboard, one labeled *A*, one *B*, and one *C*. I review the assignment on the ditto, then discuss what they feel are some additional criteria for grading papers. These are placed on the board as *A* paper criteria. In ten minutes the class decides the following are important (listed in the order mentioned):

Neat writing	No scratched out words
Correct spelling	Proper headings

No drug-out sentences
Put in periods, question marks, and capitals
No wrinkled papers
Words spaced out correctly
Use pen, not pencil
Turn in on time
Knock down late papers

They are astonished to learn they will be grading the papers. I explain the procedure: "The final grade on your paper will be the average of grades from two different readers, one from this class, the other from another class. The paper that you grade must also be accompanied by an analysis of both the good and not so good parts of the paper. Do not pick your friend's paper because you will have a difficult time being objective, and your analysis will not stand up if you grade more on friendship than on the merits of the paper." Experience demands I add an additional qualifier: "If you do not do a good job on your analysis, *your* grade will be lowered. For example, if you give your friend a *B* grade which is higher than you can prove on your analysis, the grade on your paper will be lowered, and the same applies to your 'enemy.' Remember, I have read them all and know roughly the problems and strengths of the papers. You must catch some of the obvious errors."

To encourage students to read the essays closely, I have them copy all the misspelled words onto their evaluation sheets (see *C-* and *C+* evaluations of Len's and Don's papers). This activity proves to be great fun when doing someone else's paper. When the evaluations are returned, the writers correct these words by using a spelling dictionary. Generally they can locate the area in the dictionary in which the correct word can be found. I am not teaching dictionary mastery here, but just trying to ease them into the idea that they can look up words, and can do so with some success if they but try. Their natural inclination is not even to try, using the logic that "If I don't know how to spell it, how can I look it up?" I help out whenever they get stuck. In this activity, I do not want to emphasize spelling mistakes, but it proves to be the only way they will do critical word-by-word reading. A benefit that soon emerges is that sentence fragments, scratched out words, and punctuation errors are soon spotted. Also, this assignment is a way of emphasizing the editing stage, at which few bothered to pause in their rush to complete a written product.

They set to work. I circulate to clarify the assignment. Undetected, Paul goes to the front of the room, then inexplicably leans over the top of the six by two-and-one-half foot table. When I look up he is doubled over such that the top of his body is sprawled on top of the table's narrow end; the lower part of his body hangs over the edge with his feet on the floor. He is analyzing Brenda's paper. He writes:

A

(Brenda) you heading is proper place and you have neat writing and your correct spelling and you put a space between you words. You shold hav finished your sentens at the other side of your paper. the reason why you deserve an a is because you have nice hand-writing. And I am not giveing you an a barkabbing.

Most of the students do reasonably well on the evaluation. Unfortunately, in Len's and Don's case, the process gets out of hand. Instead of quietly doing the analysis, they begin openly discussing each other's paper. Just before completing their evaluation, the following conversation takes place:

Len: "If you give me a *A*, I'll bash you side the head."

Don: "Oh good, I can give you a *E*.

Len: "If you give me a *C* or less, I'll bash you side the head agin."

Don: "OK. I'll give you a *B*. But you better give me one too!"

Predictably both end with *B* grades (see samples). Don makes the following comments about Len's paper:

(Len) B

I see that he work on it for a long time on this paper. He got in to this assiment alot. The paragraphs are good and long and the first word is indented Rofe a inch and periods at the end of the sentences.

I see alot of words mispelt and he put words over other words and some of the gl's not capital lize and some of the t's not cross and the i's not dotted and ~~five~~ three words scatched out.

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And no ~~text~~ title on the top of the paper. No intentation

Len makes the following comments about Don's paper. (Note, according to him, no words are written down as misspelled).

writing ok B
correct spelling
proper heading
not wrinkled
used pen
turned it in on time
dont scratched out words
good capitals

Both are reasonably pleased with their "analysis," and place their papers on top of the *B* tagboard letter on the large table in the front of the room. The rest of the class finishes and places their papers on the appropriate *A, B, C,* pile. However, for Len and Don, the shock is still to come, as the fourth period students have not yet evaluated their papers. The first is returned to Don the next day, with the following comments and a *C-* grade (Len received a *C+*):

A+ K; 11 (A)

(Don)

~~x~~ expressive writing
can't read the words
Why did you put the some thing on page 3 and ex is on page 1.
he start out fine but everytime he gets something he always puts a period where it don't belong
page 2 you have the indentation it belongs on page 1.

Page 1 you put "for all the junk for all
1 costumes the junk"
2 tail
3 burnt
4. bulldozer
5 burns

you should make your word better for people to read
you should repeat your self

Don reacts quite aggressively to the grade on his paper. He crosses out the *C* grade, puts an *A+* on his paper and demands to know *who* graded his paper! I remind him to read the comments and if any are not true, I'll consider raising the grade. He reads the comments, does not challenge the conclusions, but again demands to know who graded his paper. By this time he has the class in an uproar, and others have read his paper and the comments and point out that the last two paragraphs on page three were copied word-for-word from the front page, just as the evaluation states. He looks at me and says, "You told me to do that!" The class laughs. He continues to demand to know who put that grade on his paper. I refuse to tell him and note that it sounds like he is saying he wants revenge against this person. He quickly says, "No! I want to kill him!" He writes the word "Kill" on his paper.

Len receives his paper with a *C+* grade and the following comments:

(Len)

No title
to many t
I can't read some of his words
some of it dont make sense like there that look chare
No indentation good
I put his pencils in
I forget to dot his I on is
Not up writing it to close together
you cant scratch out the word you could use liquid paper.
No writing on the back.
does not misspelling dad it is wroe

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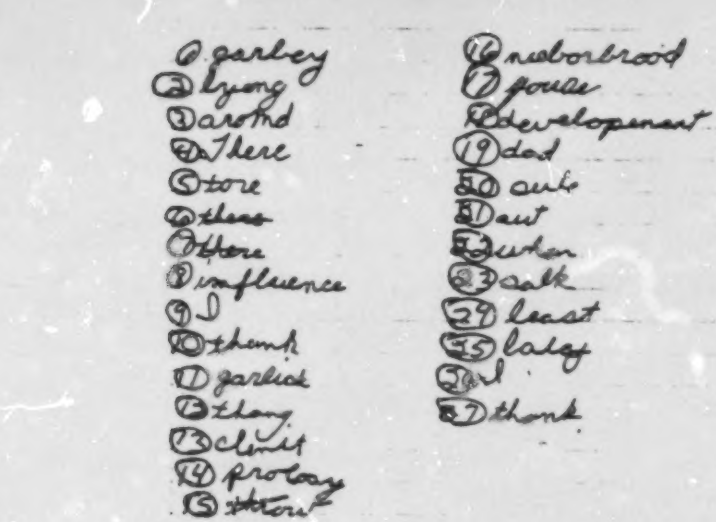

Len is no more gracious in accepting another student's evaluation of his written work. He also wants to know *who* put that grade on his paper. He reacts by placing a large *E* on his paper. I am struck by the contrast in reactions to the same evaluation feedback. Don reacts by placing a very large *A* on his paper; Len places a large *E* on his paper. I wonder if there are some self-concept implications in these two very different reactions. Their essays follow.

Don's essay:

Clean up the goat farm

If H-mart made it in to a parking lot for the store. If they did that they will get more customers on the holidays. H-mart will increase their business in the same year it is built. However if they did that it would be very expensive having to take out all the trees and plants. Were will they put all the stuff that cant be burnt.

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They can put it in a hole and then put dirt a cement over it.

If the owners made it in a housing development. They would have to clean up the goat farm. The owners would have to get a bulldozer and a heavy duty dump truck for all the junk for all the junk that can not be burn.

An for example the plastic, wood, metal, trees, plants and all the trees would have to be taking out. But it will cost a lot of money to clean it up.

If they did that they will get the money from doing all of the work but the owner will get the money from the people buying the homes of or from renting it out to the people.

For exemple the people who would move in would be parents that had sons a daughters going to High school. Or parents that had high kids that will be going to high school in a short time.

INTRO-DUCTION

Most people do not mine having the goat farm dirty because they put some of the junk in there them self. Others people do mine because that makes the neighborhood look bad and makes them look bad too.

Copied from the first two paragraphs on page one.

I think the goat farm should be clean up so it will look alot better.

If K-mart made it into a parking lot for the store. If they did that it well bring in more costemers on the holidays. K-mart will increase their business in the same yeare it was built.

However, if they did that it would be very expensive. The construction workers would buff to make the goat farm all level on the top of it and on to bottom.

Len's essay:

I thank that the goat farm should be cleaned up. It makes Ingraham look bad. When I was in the goat farm it had alot of garbey lying around. There is same School books sure up. There is same bed springs and there is same broken bottles from the partys.

I think it should be cleaned up because it makes a bad influence on the school and the people that live by the good farm. From Ingraham being a new school.

But i thank that if the school cleans it up then sameone would come and fall it ball of garlich just because Ingraham cleaned it up. Ingraham would have to put a gate a cross

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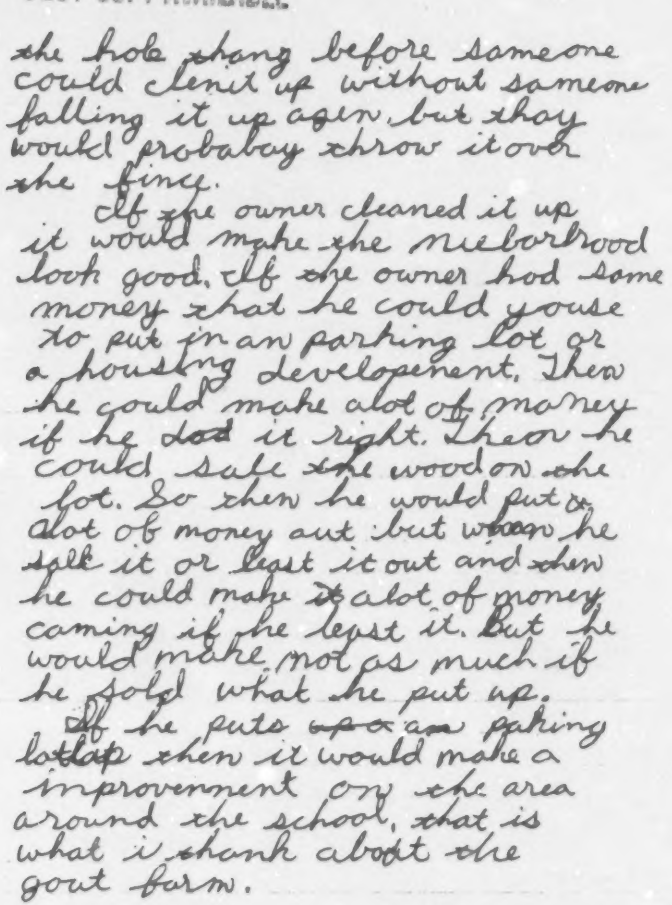

she hole thing before someone could clean up without someone falling it up agen. but they would probabay throw it over the fincy.

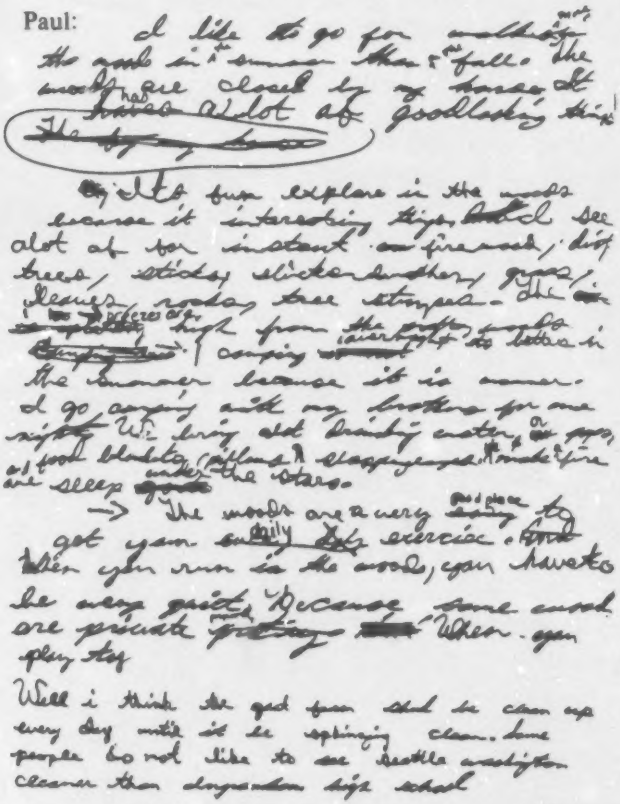
If the owner cleaned it up it would make the neiborhood look good. If the owner had some money that he could youse to put in an parking lot or a housing developement. Then he could make alot of money if he did it right. Then he could sale the wood on the lot. So then he would put a alot of money out but when he sell it or lease it out and then he could make a alot of money coming if he lease it. But he would make not as much if he sold what he put up.

If he puts ~~up a~~ an paking ~~lot~~lap then it would make a improvement on the area around the school, that is what I thank about the gout farm.

Paul, my dispenser of sensible wisdom, fails to follow his own good advice. During the months of October and November, he racks up twenty tardies to class, explaining that "the locker was stuck; the bus was late; I had to get my notebook," and so on. As I am very busy with others when he comes in, I do not always stop to question his excuses. One day I notice a similarity with the previous day. Paul is coming late to class picking his teeth with a toothpick. After some investigation, I discover he has been in the lunchroom having a leisurely morning meal with his friends, compliments of the school's free breakfast program. I speak to the principal and henceforth no students are allowed to linger after the bell rings for first period class. However this does not change Paul's long-time problem of being absent and tardy to class. Despite outstanding verbal ability, he is never quite able to benefit from writing

instruction. He has been diagnosed as neurologically impaired, but I feel many other factors could also be responsible for his lack of progress. His folder bulges with school-related problems. He attempts some writing.

Paul:



We do one final activity with this assignment. The elements they consider important to an *A* paper are still on the side board, and we start our discussion by ranking them in importance. Here are the results:

1. No drug out sentences
2. Neat writing
3. Correct spelling
4. Proper heading
5. Periods, question marks, capitals
6. No scratched out sentences
7. Words spaced correctly
8. Use pen, not pencil
9. No wrinkled papers
10. Turn in on time

Their perceptions of what is important in an *A* paper closely parallel the problems they have in writing. I accept their evaluations but note that

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no one has mentioned anything about content, ideas, examples, interest, and other things I mention in our individual conferences. Nevertheless, this is where they are in their evolving perceptions of the writing process. Hence, I design an *edit/evaluation* sheet which includes their own expressed criteria for a good paper. They are now to self-evaluate their own papers and make quality judgments in areas they consider important. Don, still highly emotional over the grading of his paper, takes ten seconds to check "Above Average" in every category. He is spoiling for another argument. Others notice his reaction and criticize him for it. I ignore his behavior, circulate to help others and let peer pressure build up for most of the period. Fifteen minutes before the end I give him another chance. He has cooled down, sat reasonably still through his ostracism, and now does an honest evaluation (see his analysis, and others).

EDIT/EVALUATE Your (Your Classmate's) Essay

Name: Don Title of Essay: Clean up the goat farm

Check these items	Woops, I forgot	Below Ave.	Ave.	Above Ave.	Comment?
1. Proper heading			✓		
2. Title			✓		
3. Introduction	✓				
4. Thesis statement	✓				
5. Indent paragraphs			✓		
6. Topic sentence in each paragraph		✓			
7. Each paragraph is about only one subject			✓		
8. Conclusion	✓				
9. Handwriting neat and readable		✓			
10. Overall appearance of essay is without scratched out words		✓			
11. Periods (punctuation marks) used properly		✓			
12. No words left out of sentences, or repeated	✓				

Total number of words written 294

Total number of misspelled words 12 $\sqrt{294}$ = 17.13 (Divide for errors/wd ratio)

The total number of words written by the class on this assignment ranged from 153 to 498. The average was 348. My average was 294.

The average spelling errors-to-words ratio was 15. My spelling error ave. was 13.

To improve my writing, next time I will Be putting a Thesis statement in the right spot. In a introduction, Conclusion and no word repeated in the paragraph

Note: Save this sheet to compare with your next essay.

Evaluator's name _____

EDIT/EVALUATE Your (Your Classmate's) Essay

Name: Judy Title of Essay: [illegible]

Check these items	Woops, I forgot	Below Ave.	Ave.	Above Ave.	Comment?
1. Proper heading				✓	
2. Title			✓		
3. Introduction			✓		
4. Thesis statement			✓		
5. Indent paragraphs			✓		
6. Topic sentence in each paragraph			✓		
7. Each paragraph is about only one subject			✓		
8. Conclusion	✓				
9. Handwriting neat and readable		✓			
10. Overall appearance of essay is without scratched out words				✓	
11. Periods (punctuation marks) used properly				✓	
12. No words left out of sentences, or repeated			✓		

Total number of words written 406

Total number of misspelled words 19 $\sqrt{406}$ (Divide for errors/wd ratio)

The total number of words written by the class on this assignment ranged from 159 to 886. The average was 369. My average was 406.

The average spelling errors-to-words ratio was 15. My spelling error ave. was 31.

To improve my writing, next time I will [illegible]

EDIT/EVALUATE Your (Your Classmate's) Essay

Name: Ron Title of Essay: [illegible]

Check these items	Woops, I forgot	Below Ave.	Ave.	Above Ave.	Comment?
1. Proper heading			X		
2. Title		X			
3. Introduction				X	
4. Thesis statement		X			
5. Indent paragraphs			X		
6. Topic sentence in each paragraph			X		
7. Each paragraph is about only one subject				X	
8. Conclusion		X			
9. Handwriting neat and readable			X		
10. Overall appearance of essay is without scratched out words		X			
11. Periods (punctuation marks) used properly				X	
12. No words left out of sentences, or repeated		X			

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Total number of words written 169

Total number of misspelled words 3 $3/\frac{169}{19} = \frac{56\frac{1}{3}}{19}$ (Divide for errors/wd ratio)

The total number of words written by the class on this assignment ranged from

406 to 152. The average was 246. My average was ____.

The average spelling errors-to-words ratio was 15. My spelling error ave. was 10.

To improve my writing, next time I will spend one day more, and check my thesis statement, conclusion, appearance of the paper, and repeated words, write more words

EDIT/EVALUATE Your (Your Classmate's) Essay

Name: Len Title of Essay: clean up the good form

Check these items	Wrong, I forgot	Below Ave.	Ave.	Above Ave.	Comments
1. Proper heading			✓		
2. Title	✓				
3. Introduction	✓				
4. Thesis statement		✓			
5. Indent paragraphs			✓		
6. Topic sentence in each paragraph		✓			
7. Each paragraph is about only one subject		✓			
8. Conclusion	✓				
9. Handwriting neat and readable		✓			
10. Overall appearance of essay is without scratched out words		✓			
11. Periods (punctuation marks) used properly		✓			
12. No words left out of sentences, or repeated			✓		

Total number of words written 220

Total number of misspelled words 11 / ____ (Divide for errors/wd ratio)

The total number of words written by the class on this assignment ranged from

153 to 404. The average was 246. My average was ____.

The average spelling errors-to-words ratio was 15. My spelling error ave. was 7.

To improve my writing, next time I will have a title, introduction and Conclusion. I will go [redacted] my paper and correct my punctuation and make my handwriting neat and readable.

Information on the lower part of the sheet was obtained by placing a chart on the board. There was a fair amount of confusion with the math as some used their count instead of mine, some were unable to do simple averaging and division, and some entered information on the wrong lines. However, the analytic principle is more important than mathematical accuracy at this point.

SPELLING ERROR ANALYSIS OF GOAT FARM PAPERS

(Information for next time)

Name	*Total wds / Spell errors*	*Frequency of error*
1. Judy	408/13 =	1 error every 31 words
2. Jim	153/7 =	1 error every 21 words
3. Cathy	208/43 =	1 error every 5 words
4. Len	220/33 =	1 error every 7 words
5. Brenda	340/7 =	1 error every 49 words
6. Don	284/12 =	1 error every 23 words
7. Ron	169/3 =	1 error every 56 words
8. Paul	(No final draft submitted)	

I had considerable reservations about displaying their spelling errors for each other to see. Would they be hostile, aggressive, or abusive when others saw their limited abilities? Would others call a person with obvious problems in spelling "Stupid?" Yet, at some point they will have to be faced with the problem of spelling in a way that is meaningful. I thus decided to do it all at once, in a class activity, and in relation to one another.

Perhaps what helps most is their sense of fairness. As long as I can find some good things to say about their papers, they can accept the negative information on spelling errors. I make the same point as Mandel (quoted above, p. 10) that spelling errors divert attention from what is being said, and if a writer believes that what he or she is saying is important, then anything that interferes with a reader's comprehension must be eliminated. In the context of our discussion, I also begin to emphasize how many words have been written, as a way of preparing them for a much longer piece I have in mind (see Chapter Five).

For a wrap-up, I display the "Composing Process" transparency again, circling the editing stage in red as a reminder that the final product is not complete until it has been proofread for errors in spelling, punctuation, title, headings, and so on, items which, by their own analysis on the side board, are high priorities for a good paper. My comments remind them that overlooking this stage is not related so much to a learning disability as to just plain laziness in not even taking time to read for possible errors. Also established, according to their evaluation of other papers, is the ability to identify by sight, with a high degree of accuracy, a misspelled word. They might not be certain how to spell without error, but by developing familiarity with and a routine in using the spelling dictionary, they will take another giant step forward in the composing process.

Next, the "Essay Error Record Sheet" is handed out for students to

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record spelling errors made on the last essay. They are informally quizzed: "Len, spell *garbage*."

"OK. Uh, *garbage*." Len repeats the word pronounced by the teacher, (auditory) simultaneously writes and says the letter *g* (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic reinforcement). He writes the remainder of the word by saying each letter as he writes it, then pronounces the word again after he has finished spelling it (see sample of his and Don's lists).

ESSAY ERROR RECORDS SHEET

(Record of words that must be spelled correctly)

...next time...

Name: Len

Date	Essay Title	Words missed but now spelled correctly
	The goat farm	garbage
		liesing
		around
		There
		torn
		influence
		I
		things
		garlic
		thing
		clean it
		probably.
		throw
		neighborhood
		use
		development
		did
		sell
		lease
		lot

ESSAY ERROR RECORDS SHEET

(Record of words that must be spelled correctly)

...next time...

Name: Don

Date	Essay Title	Words missed but now spelled correctly
	Goat farm	customers
		built
		burnt (correct)
		bulldozer
		burn (correct)

With all the emphasis on error analysis they must not lose sight of the good parts of their pieces, so they briefly summarize *both* good things and improvement needed:

My writing

Here are some good things about my writing. For example I got a good paragraph a a good heading a good spelling

I need to improve my writing by writing a little but bigger so people can read it a understand it.

Samples of Goat Farm essays follow.

Judy:

The mess goat farm

I think that goat farm is not a very good place to walk around. Their is so much garbage like newspaper, pop cans, tin can a candy bar - I don't think it's safe. It cleaned up. the goat farm would be a more in about a week Because the people would go in the goat farm a throw there garbage on the ground.

I think it should be clean up because it will be to expensive. For example the grass need to be cut a some of the tree need to be cut down out of the way a the stolen boat would have to be cut but so people can walk threw there. It got all

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of the dump each - that would cost alot of money.

People would just mess it up again. Like for instance the trucks would go in the goat farm & throw their dinner bag, potato chips bag & a sandwiches wraper & paper cup, orange juice bottle & cigarettes butt, cigarettes wraper, old people would throw their garbage away. For example car motors, oil filter, old raggy rugs, paint cans, cardboard box, & they also throw away pants, underwear, sock, baby shirt & news paper.

If the goat farm was cleaned up people might take their garbage an would make good a move it up. North west park is - very nice park. It got a little swing park for the little kids also a swing set & a slide for the kids to play on if people throw garbage in north west park you would proble see big ugly rats, cockroach & other insects.

If they took down goat farm the kids would throw their garbage around the school & the school would look like a disaster area.

For example the front door would be a mess. The kids go to school & buy something to eat & eat it on the way to school & throw their potato chips bag, pepsi can & candy bar wraps by the front door. The back door would be a mess too because the kids would bring their lunch outside & throw their lunch all over the place. For example milk carton, dinner bag, potato chips bags, candy bar wraps, coke cups, lunch bags, news paper, gum wraps, cigarettes wraper & other thing you can think of

Brenda:

Problem with the goat farm

Some people belive that the goat farm should be cleaned up. Others think it should be torn down and have a store or house built there. I believe that the goat farm is not a very clean place and should be cleaned up.

I took a walk through the goat farm

and saw many things I found candy wrappers, straws, plastic cups, milk cartons, toilet paper, beer tops, glass, cigarette wrappers, and cigarette butts, school students toss.

The goat farm is a very messy place and could be embarrassing. It is used as a place where school students smoke cigarettes and marijuana, and drink alcohol, but it is not just the students that messes the goat farm up. The adult mess it up by using it as a garbage area.

Some Adults use the goat farm mainly for a place to throw their trash, so they dont have to pay to dump their garbage at a public transfer station. Adult mainly dump soggy Kitchen rugs, clothing they wore like pants, shirts, underware, sock and shoes. They also dump tires, car motors, and old mattress somebody did not want.

If it was up to me, I have a couple ideas. One would be tore the whole place down except for a couple trees, then there would not be any place to hide out, and nobody would worry about it. Two would be to build a couple of houses because it is with in walking distance of stors and restraunts. Three, if one or two dos not work out, I would try and catch as many kids and adults who are trespassing and messing it up and if it is possible I would give them a choice, to either help clean up the garbage and make it look clean or pay a fine for doing what they have done four, if I caught many people and they would rather pay a fine than clean up,

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I would use that to pay the city government or who ever possible to clean it up

Cathy:

Goat farm clean up

There is the lady live next door to us. She is over 60 years old. She can't remember books. She keeps her yard clean. Old people care. Keeping thing clean. The younger generation and some adults don't care about their environment. The goat farm is a good example.

That one thing in autumn walk that made a difference.

I'll use, goat, bottles, beer bottles, cans, beer cans, bottle, glass bottles.

There are many thing that is like them. Some

Note books, paper, some pencils, soda, candy wrapper, gum, popcorn, hamburger, Kentucky fried chicken, bucket, beer bottles, beer tops

There are many restaurants from the world and fast food

carry out, you can drive, eat, carry, eat fast, eat place,

The younger generation and some adults don't care about their environment. Some adults, high school students, college students, high school students drop trash from what they eat. There are many

restaurants that provide food and trash that eat outside. There are

5 things that the younger generation and some adults that make the goat farm

ugly. They should clean up and not we will because they dirty up it

up.

The books bad for the weather is that the old people tell that they burned did early they for the comment.

The old people's should do something about

there are some one days.

Evaluation of Goat Farm Assignment

One persistent problem of mine all through the composing process is to continually underestimate the amount of time special education students require to complete an assignment. Their work rate is far slower than that of the regular student, a condition that causes additional problems when they are mainstreamed into regular classes and have to meet competitive deadlines. For example, they are almost equal to regular students in the word-hoarding technique via direct observation of concrete objects from the autumn walk experience. They can generate dialogue about a subject. However, tney take substantially more time in

transferring direct observations and oral dialogue into written discourse. To oversimplify, it seems this transference is nearly impossible for some mentally retarded, but very possible for most students of average I.Q. with a learning disability—when given adequate time.

Another problem I must deal with is a desire to see the immediate results of my instruction. For instance, I have taught them how to classify common items, and evidence of this skill should be reflected in the students' selections of examples in a paragraph. They should *know* how to unify a paragraph by selecting details which are related to each other. I see no indication at this point that this skill is functioning consistently enough as a thoroughly understood technique. Is my instruction in this skill a failure because some may not have the conceptual ability to apply this concept? Is it a failure because I didn't teach it effectively? Is it a failure because of my desire to see success in only concrete and immediate results? All are possibilities. Yet, where is it written that students have to grow at my expectation rate, or to coincide with quarter and semester grade periods? If I have any impact on their writing, it is probably more in the form of a nudge in certain directions rather than as a leader, pied-piper like, on the glory road to total composition mastery. What skills they'll have when put to the test months or years from now, I'll never know. Maybe it's better that way.

At the present time, my experience with teaching composition to the special education student indicates processes which they can readily do and some they have much difficulty doing. The basic expository form of introduction, body, and conclusion generally seems to be understood. The activity of classifying common items is also understood, thanks mainly to Jim Sabol's system, but this technique has not been internalized to the point where it is routinely used to solve problems in paragraph design. Overall, the special education composing processes seem to be, by comparison, more like immediate Polaroid snapshots, or disconnected scenes from home movies, than the smoother sequences of professional films. Perhaps this progress is consistent with their fledgling status as writers.

They thrive on group interaction on the verbal-visual level. However, in presentations to the class, I occasionally feel like a TV quiz master keeping the audience entertained and motivated. After my "show" I expect them all to have learned certain information or techniques to apply to their follow-up composition assignment. Instead, sometimes they sit passively, almost as if it is now commercial time, a word from their sponsor, and if they wait long enough, it will go away and the show will go on. However, "it" doesn't, and for the next thirty minutes the commercial responsibility is present. The transition of knowledge

presented through demonstrations to individual application seems singularly wanting. I have seen this same problem in the regular classes too, but not to the same degree. Do I expect too much?

My insistence on expository form (Edit/Evaluation Sheet) reveals an impatience with the exterior trappings of expository structure. I don't want to keep working at that level. I don't want to keep reminding students that paragraphs should be indented, a title is required, this, that, and those words are misspelled again. I want these basics to be mastered so my effort can be spent working with content and the more exciting development of rhetorical options and strategies. On the other hand, the temptation is strong to push remedial basics, and already I'm glancing at Boning's individualized series on capitalization and punctuation and wondering if I can slip it in. They need it. Yet, when I listen closely to what they are saying about their writing, I frequently hear an exchange of excited dialogue bubbling above what could be a dull adherence to the routine of just another writing "assignment." Realistically, I'll need to select a few deficits, for there is not time to remediate every problem that besets the written product. This imprecise compromise sometimes causes me to worry more about what I do not teach than what I do teach.

Perhaps this is an insight not worth mentioning, but I notice that when the students are on their feet observing, then back to their desks writing, the change from large muscle to small muscle activity seems to stimulate the mental composing activity. I wonder if my writing classroom should have, instead of rows of desks, places to stand and write, or sprawl on carpets, bean bags, or pillows. Experience with classroom control tells me I may well be inviting chaos as an unwelcome guest. Yet, at the least, stretching and moving around the room would seem worth trying when the creative juices stagnate, in addition to the freedom to go outside with a clipboard and record thoughts and impressions.

V

Picture a Story

Ideas for this assignment are generated by scattering on the classroom floor approximately thirty different black and white glossy news photographs obtained from the *Seattle Post Intelligencer.* Ron surveys the front of the room littered with photographs and says, "Boy, he must have really reached the bottom of the barrel for this one!" I explain the assignment:

> This is an exercise in characterization. Come take a look at the pictures and select one you would like to write about. There are pictures of ordinary people, sports heroes, family tragedies, movie stars, national disasters, mysteries, competitive events, inventions, objects, advancements in science, medicine, and a generous supply of our daily sex and violence photos that newspapers feel we have a right to know *all* about.

Students then do a walk-through and select photos that appeal to them. When they are back in their seats, I distribute an eight and one-half by fourteen inch dittoed sheet with a face on it to emphasize we will be writing mainly about people. The next instructions:

> Enter all the names of things you see on your picture on this sheet in the "names" column. Try to list at least twenty items (see sample).

Word Hoard

Names (Nouns)	Attributes (Adjectives)	Predicating Verbs)

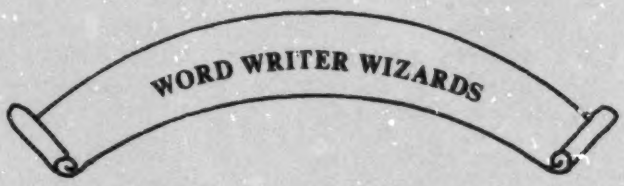
Soon all are analyzing their pictures and recording names of things they see. We move into the *adjectives* column as we had done with the board work and individual work in our "Autumn Walk" exercise. They all have seen how to do this activity, which will result in sentences that parallel the same basic approach previously used. Throughout this semester's unit, I try to circle back and reuse familiar rhetorical patterns and writing techniques to reinforce a few fundamental aspects of the composing process.

Len has selected two pictures—one of cowboy Jim Ward ready to ride a bucking bronco, the other of a bull rider—both in a rodeo setting. Brenda has chosen the picture of a woman tennis player; Jim has selected a fishing boat; Judy, one of two men talking; Cathy, a cat; Don, an aerial view of wreckage from a Kansas City twister; Ron, a photo on TV advertisements. Paul is absent again. Before they are finished with this activity, I drop a bombshell:

> This last paper must be at least a thousand words long. It will count as your final test, and must contain an introduction, paragraphs, topic sentences, and all the other parts of the composing process we have studied thus far.

To mitigate the shock and resistance I knew would come with the thousand word assignment, I display a twelve-hundred-fifty word essay written by another special education student. (I had carefully coached her to produce this quantity and bring it out at the moment when resistence is greatest). They now have irrefutable evidence that it is possible for someone with their disabilities to do it. I do not mention the five paragraph essay as a goal, but feel the assignment of a thousand words is a powerful challenge, and a worthwhile achievement when completed. Their progress will be marked on the "Word Writer Wizards" chart that is displayed prominently on the classroom wall. My son, Tracy, gave me the idea for this chart because of his consuming interest in the game "Dungeons and Dragons" (see Figure Four).

All reassess their choices in relation to the thousand word assignment but most decide to stick with their photos. I circulate again, give suggestions on how to procede, and mention to Don that he should probably choose another picture. I note that his picture of a Kansas twister does not have any people in it and this assignment is to be about people. He immediately corrects me by pointing to six hard-hat fuzzy dots in the left hand corner, the approximate width of a pencil lead. I mention it will be very hard to write a thousand words about these dots unless he wants to explore the possible impact of this devistation on a family—however, no family is shown. He starts to argue and defend his picture, so I leave him with the suggestion that he might wish to reconsider his



_____	1,000	*10th level Lord*—Charm teacher for an "A" grade (spell)
_____	900	*Lord*—Gain spell to charm teacher out of next assignment
_____	800	*Superhero*—Gain gems and jewels worth 700 gold pieces and a flame strike scroll
_____	700	*Champion*—Find a fireball wand and a regeneration ring
_____	600	*Veteran*—Find a horseman's flail and a potion of longevity
_____	500	*Swashbuckler*—Acquire a four-masted sailing ship with a pirate crew
_____	400	*Hero*—Save a maiden in distress and gain reward or win a knight in shining armour
_____	300	*Swordsman*—Find the famous sword in the stone
_____	200	*Warrior*—Acquire a potion of invisibility
_____	100	*Myrmidon*—Gain gems worth 100 gold pieces
_____	000	*Prisoner*, "E" level (grade)

Dungeon Master: Mr. Marik, with whip and 10th level antispell potion

Figure Four

choice if the story does not seem to be going well. He continues to fill out the sheet despite my concern and gets some of the items mixed up (see sample).

Word Hoard

Names (Nouns)	Attributes (Adjectives)	Predicating Verbs
Kansas city, kan Roof collapse [redacted] [redacted] workers Bricks oldsmobiles Ponies people roofs office steel rod aluminum footsteps 2x4 of wood letter cabel fance pipes air ducks doors glass electrical wiring	collapse roof stressed [redacted] pipes bent metel rod broken pices of wood broken aluminum broken wires smoke stacks bent crack pipes roof frame bent Bent Doors [redacted] roofs rusted	

While this interaction is going on, the class finishes listing nouns and adjectives, then comes to a dead halt. They do not know how to get started again. To get them started, I suggest a technique learned from Roger Huff of Washington State University (another fine lecturer at the Puget Sound Writing Program summer classes). Each student is to describe the opening scene as if he or she were behind a TV camera:

> First, get a wide-angle shot of the whole scene to establish a setting for the story (the old funnel introduction cloaked in

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TV terms). In this sweep, establish a point of reference and write to answer as many questions as to *who, what, when, where, how* and *why* the people or objects are present.

After this, roll right up to a character or two for a close-up shot. Start with inner dialogue, or a conversation between people, or with action. For example, action can start with the shrill of a whistle as the gate swings open and a cowboy on a bucking bronco bolts into the arena, the swish of a tennis racket as the call "deuce!" is heard while a stunned crowd stares in disbelief, the loud "crunch" as two cars collide, and so on. From action, then move into the character and provide a setting through his or her eyes. Then roll the camera back again for a wide-angle shot and discuss the events which led up to this event or piece of action.

The class does not respond as I believe it should. We discuss the flashback idea, but most find it a difficult concept. I realize too late that I've not divided the assignment into small bits, but just laid the idea out to be devoured by a group assumed to be starving for an intellectual feast of wonderous possibilities. As a result, most don't get the connection, and Darrell, one of my frequent drop-ins and drop-outs, makes the wrong interpretation. The picture he chose has a baseball player sliding into home plate. With all my talk about using TV techniques, he begins to describe the TV cameraman in the Kingdome (our large local sports colosseum). Darrell will stick around for two more days, then disappear for the remainder of the semester. We all have our priorities.

Giving instructions to special education students seldom fails to present a unique challenge. Sometimes directions are taken too literally, other times they are followed perfectly, or partially, or ignored. Don starts talking to Lee while I am half way through explaining the assignment, so when I am through, no one is clear on how to apply the information to their work. For this reason, and others previously mentioned, I circulate and redefine to each student what is needed in relation to his specific piece, breaking the TV technique into smaller, sequential parts. They first write the wide-angle shot, then I explain the close-up idea again and they consider that idea. Finally, I propose other scenes as possibilities, bit-by-bit, repetitiously and individually.

Despite their writing progress, something continues to bother me. I get the impression they are curiously unable to use tools appropriately. It's not exactly like a chimpanzee staring dumbly at a transistor radio, then using it to crack open a nut. Yet, in even some of the less severe cases, they exhibit a general inability or unwillingness to make the connection between a useful aid and a solution to their problem. For example, I have distributed the "Character Development Checklist" (Figure

Five) to assist them in writing descriptions of a personality if none can be recalled or invented. It is only marginally successful. I know how it may work better next time. I will send them out with this checklist as a guide, but have them fill out their own descriptions of people as they observe them eating in the lunchroom, playing games in the gym, walking or talking in the halls. From this experience, they may be more likely to develop better characterizations. The problem with this approach is that in a world filled with abstractions and symbols, it is increasingly less possible to *experience* all that needs to be understood. The squiggly lines on a road map, the grids on a street guide, bus schedules, instructions for assembling new products, manuals, policies, or office procedures all pose problems for readers unable to use these helpful "tools" without first experiencing them. The "Character Development Checklist" disappears in some folders never to see daylight until clean-out time at the end of the semester, while they go on struggling to think of details to describe a character they are trying to develop. I know they have come to this writing place on journeys far from academic lands and awkwardly learn to use the pen and scroll. Yet, in their own inefficient and mysterious ways, most *can* learn to write if they but try to use the aids and instruction designed to help them.

It seems to me that five class periods per week, in addition to whatever time they have at home and in other classes, should be sufficient time to complete the thousand word assignment in a week, possibly two weeks at most, if they write only two hundred words during a twenty-four hour day. Two weeks later, only Don has completed his paper. He has abandoned the Kansas twister story and asked me if he could develop his previous story on customizing a 1955 Ford pickup truck. This is not exactly a piece on characterization, but as he is so insistent, I grant permission to procede and note that as he has already written part of it, this seems like a good way to get a thousand words. He has already thought that through! While the others are still trying to finish their assignment, he loudly announces, "Mr. Marik, I'm going to write a two thousand word essay." Before I can respond, the class pounces on Don, and a fight nearly breaks out as Len leaps to his feet and pursues Don around the room, getting in a couple of shots on his favorite punching bag. I am finally able to restore order, commend Don for his worthwhile goal, and note he will be the all-time leader, for no special education student of mine has every written that many words before. I help Don on his paper in class, he takes it home, works on it week days and week ends. Two weeks later he drops another bombshell. "I'm going to write a four thousand word essay!" He has doubled the original assignment, then doubled that goal.

Predictably, the class reacts with anger. Then Don and I share our

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Name _____

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

__ Height __ Wt. __ Hair
__ Eyes __ Clothes __ Age
__ Profile

MOVEMENT:

__ Graceful
__ Quick
__ Slow
__ Clumsy
__ Bouncy
__ Strutting
__ Heavy footed
__ Waddles
__ Strides
__ Deliberate
__ Swings arms

OTHER:

__ Glasses
__ Hearing
__ Sight

FACE:

__ Lips
__ Eyebrows
__ Wrinkles
__ Beard
__ Skin
__ Ears
__ Nose
__ Teeth
__ Mustache

DIALOGUE STYLE:

__ Short, crisp
__ Philosophical
__ Excited
__ Crude
__ Pragmatic
__ Humorous
__ Sparkling
__ Accented

UNUSUAL CHARACTERISTICS:

__ Fidgets
__ Picks nose
__ Bites nails
__ Scratches chin
__ Scratches ribs
__ Rubs lobe of ear
__ Belches
__ Smacks lips
__ Rubs thigh
__ Gestures with hands
__ Rubs chin on shoulder
__ Pinches lower lip
__ Picks up coffee cup, not using the handle
__ Cradles chin in hand, elbow on table
__ Folds arms on table
__ Takes long draw on cigarette
__ Caresses throat
__ Folds hands almost prayer-like over chest
__ Interlocks fingers almost prayer-like etc.

PERSONALITY TRAITS:

__ Thriftiness
__ Enthusiasm
__ Wisdom
__ Self-control
__ Initiative
__ Truthfulness
__ Patience
__ Determination
__ Cautiousness
__ Flexibility
__ Gentleness
__ Tolerance
__ Sensitivity
__ Fairness
__ Resourcefulness
__ Compassion
__ Alertness
__ Generosity
__ Gratefulness
__ Responsibility
__ Joyfulness
__ Creativity
__ Sincerity
__ Decisiveness
__ Loyalty
__ Discernment

__ Leans forward when speaking
__ Nods head when making a point
__ Barking laugh
__ Deep voice or high voice
__ Pushes glasses up nose bridge with two fingers
__ Pinches ends of both nostrils
__ Flicks long hair back on head as it falls in face
__ Tips head back and laughs
__ Hunches forward over table
__ Wrinkles forehead as speaks
__ Looks sideways as speaks
__ Hangs thumb over side of coffee cup
__ Slurps coffee or soup
__ Wrist bent backward like brushing fly from shoulder
__ Pokes tongue outward on inside of cheek
__ Smooths hair back with 3-4 fingers of both hands
__ Fingers collar with 3rd finger and thumb
__ Fist clenched under left jaw bone, elbow/table
__ Rubs off crumbs of toast between thumb/forefinger
__ Tosses and catches an object as he walks
__ Tips head way back to get last drop of liquid

- 97 -

Figure Five

secret. He has already written two thousand words. Len immediately responds, "Hey! Let's see it. I want to count that sucker!" Len snatches the paper from Don, looks it over, and then hands it back. Both he and the class are convinced that Don has indeed already written two thousand words. The competition now takes on a keener edge. No one believes they can top Don's effort, but though somewhat skeptical of his goal, they press on to exceed the thousand word assignment.

At the end of three weeks, two papers are completed. The remainder are finished after four weeks, with two exceptions. Judy and Cathy are working on major pieces well over two thousand words, and I do not feel it necessary for them to hand in their work just to satisfy the thousand word assignment. Brenda types her final 1,137 word draft (see "Billy Jean's Accident" and another she wrote, "A Special Person"). All in all, with patience, daily support, and encouragement, these students have achieved a significant breakthrough in writing confidence and skill when compared to their negative and hostile attitude toward writing only a few months before.

Remediating Selected Writing Errors

One major problem remains—how to deal with remediation. How much time and effort should I spend on remedial work vs keeping the composition momentum going? I approach the crossroads here, visualizing that one sign points to the left and reads *Remediating*, the other to the right, *Creating*. I do not want every writing effort to end with many long corrective exercises. In the end I do a limited error analysis on Len's paper which seems to justify work on two related areas which need improvement, spelling and handwriting (see sample).

ERROR ANALYSIS (SPELLING-HANDWRITING)
LEN'S "ROOTIN' TOOTIN' COWBOY" (956 WORD ESSAY)

TOTAL MISSPELLED WORDS

1.	knocked	knohed	12.	legs	lags
2.	Jim	Jina*	13.	punctures	puncturs
3.	from	fram	14.	running	runnigng*
4.	dangerous	dangurous	15.	chance	chauce*
5.	trampled	lampled	16.	not	nut
6.	everything	eveything	17.	hurt	hart
7.	former	forner	18.	animal	anamon
8.	able	abal	19.	safety	sufety
9.	doesn't	dasn't	20.	position	pusition
10.	do	dod	21.	cowboy	cowbay*
11.	many	meny	22.	kidney	kedny

* Indicates attempts at self-correction.

23.	himself	-	himsilt	28.	have	-	hove
24.	calves	-	colves	29.	there	-	thare
25.	equipment	-	equipnent*	30.	different	-	diffrent
26.	hand	-	hadnd	31.	inch	-	inc
27.	some	-	same	32.	him	-	hinm

SPECIFIC *m/n* CONFUSION

1.	Jim	-	Jina	3.	former	-	forner
2.	him	-	hinm	4.	equipment	-	equipnent

SPECIFIC OMISSIONS

1.	knocked	-	knohed	4.	kidney	-	kidny
2.	everything	-	eveything	5.	different	-	diffrent
3.	doesn't	-	dosn't	6.	inch	-	inc

SPECIFIC *h* FOR *k* HANDWRITING CONFUSION

1.	kinds	-	hinds	4.	takes	-	tahes
2.	knocked	-	knohed	5.	quick	-	quich
3.	keep	-	heep				

SPECIFIC *a* FOR *o*, *o* FOR *a* CONFUSION

1.	from	-	fram	5.	calves	-	colves
2.	doesn't	-	dasn't	6.	some	-	same
3.	not	-	nut	7.	have	-	hove
4.	cowboy	-	cowbay				

SPECIFIC SHORT VOWEL CONFUSION

1.	from	-	fram	9.	animal	-	anamon
2.	dangerous	-	dangurous	10.	safety	-	sufety
3.	doesn't	-	dasn't	11.	position	-	pusition
4.	many	-	meny	12.	cowboy	-	cowbay
5.	himself	-	himsilt	13.	calves	-	colves
6	legs	-	lags	14.	some	-	same
7.	not	-	nut	15.	have	-	hove
8.	hurt	-	hart				

Len's paper represents an "average" special education effort in that there are better essays with fewer errors, and others with more errors.* The fewest number of spelling errors to total words is one misspelled word to every fifty-six words written. The greatest number of spelling errors was one misspelled word to every five words written. The summary below indicates one misspelled word to every twenty-nine words written.

* This paper, as with others, is written with some incidental help in spelling. For example, when Len felt he needed a word spelled, I spelled it for him. Occasionally I suggested some direction by asking a question: "What do you think clowns do at a rodeo? Do you think the judges have special training before they can judge others?"

ERROR ANALYSIS SUMMARY—ROOTIN' TOOTIN' COWBOY

GENERAL INFORMATION

Total words	*956*
Total spelling errors	32
Ratio of misspelled words to total words	29

SPECIFIC ERRORS

Confusion of m/n	4	No lower case *j*	3
H for letter *k*	5	*a* for *o*, *o* for *a*	7
*l*s not dotted	8	Short vowel confusion	15
No capital *H*	8	Letter omissions	8

Other error information may be of interest, so I have included the paper below.

ROOTIN' TOOTIN' COWBOY

There is a lot of different kinds of events at a rodeo. There is bronc riding, bull riding and roping. They all take a special type of skill to be able to do these things at the Rodeo.

Jim Ward rides a bull at a redeo. He is the man who rode the best at the Round-Up rodeo on Sept. 14, 1978. He rode Yellow Jacket a bull that weighs about 800 pounds of mean-ass bull. He has about eight inch horns sticking out over, the front of his head. Steam comes out of his nose. There are six other cowboys in the ring with Jim Ward in case he gets knocked out cold when he falls off the bull. The six other cowboys and the clowns help keep the bull away from Jim Ward they can het him out of the ring safely.

Bull riding is very dangerous. Some cowboys get trampled to death but the other cowboys do it anyway but some of them came out with scratches and bruses all over their boots and some came out smelling like a rose.

Their are a lot of people going to the rodeo to see Jim Ward. He is the best roper at the rodeo. It took a lot of practice to be the best at roping, in fact it takes many years to be good at roping. It takes a lot of concintration to be good at doing anything at the rodeo.

The rodeo clowns are for the rider's safety. The clowns put a lot of energy in their work. They run around waving red scarves at the bull when the rider falls off. The clowns have to be fast on their feet and be quick thinking. They have to be strong so they can jump over the fence.

The judges have to be former rodeo riders. They have to have ridden in the rodeo for at least five years to be a judge. The judges would have to be able to spot good rides and bad rides.

The timer has to be accurate so each rider has the exactly the same time to ride bulls or to rope calves.

Jim Ward of Heppner, Ore. has the hooves of the calf and he has a lasso in his right hand ready to rope a calf. The rope for the calf is under his belt so it doesn't get tangled up when he ropes the calf. He has a pair of levis with bullet pockets.

The equipment needed to rope a calf when the cowboy has a rope, saddle and a fast horse. He needs a hat to keep the sun out of his eyes. He has cowboy boots on to have a lot of concentration to get out in front of all the people at the rodeo.

When a cowboy is a contestant, he is worried about which way the calf is going to go and how he is going to get it down.

The cowboy has to be good with a rope and good at tying a knot. He has to be able to do it fast and good. He would have to be able to lead the calf when he is run all out. The cowboy on a horse would have to rope a calf. It takes a lot of hard work to learn how to tie many different kinds of knots, that will hold a calf.

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When the bull rider is getting bounced around, he has to be able to get himself set up so he doesn't get knocked off. He has to have a good grip with his right or left hand. His right or left hand has to be able to pull himself back on the bull. But when the rider is getting knocked off he has to know how to land so he doesn't get hurt.

Most of the bull riders have had to go to the hospital at least two or three times. Some of them have to have operations on their arms and legs and some of them get kidney punctures after they get knocked around or after they land.

Some of the men in the ring open and close the gates hurt in the ring. Some of them have to ride a horse and pick up the rider after the time is up. Some of them have to ride a horse to keep the calf running in the same direction so the roper has a good chance to rope the calf.

A contestant in a rodeo has to be good at riding a horse, roping a calf, tieing knots, and not get hurt when falling off an animal. The rodeo clowns are for the riders safety. The special equipment is needed to rope a calf. Such as rope for the calfs feet. Another kind of ropes to get the calf in position. The cowboy can get hurt very easy if he doesn't pay attention to what he is doing.

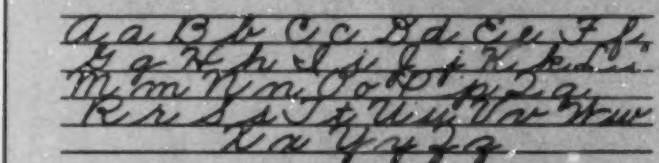
Several other patterns were also noted. For example, the word *some* was misspelled four times, but spelled correctly four times. *Have* was misspelled eight times, spelled correctly eight times. Interestingly, when the letter *H* came at the beginning of the sentence, it was misformed eight times, indicating that Len does not know how to make the capital letter *H*. Len is alerted to this problem by receiving the "Correct Handwriting" sheet attached to his final draft.

CORRECT HANDWRITING

(Essay follow-up)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Please practice the cursive letters that are checked below. Select the sheet(s) which will help you improve your handwriting. Do the work carefully and learn the correct way to make these letters. I will expect to see these letters made correctly in your next piece of written work--OR--MORE PRACTICE!!



Note: If you complete all assigned handwriting and spelling work satisfactorily (and on time), you will get no less than a "C" grade on the next essay you complete.

There are other problems. The *j* was not dotted three out of three times; the *i* not dotted eight times indicating inattention to this detail either in the drafting or revising stage. Even on the handwriting practice sheet the same error was made when this letter was practiced in isolation. This information, when given to Len, becomes part of his individualized

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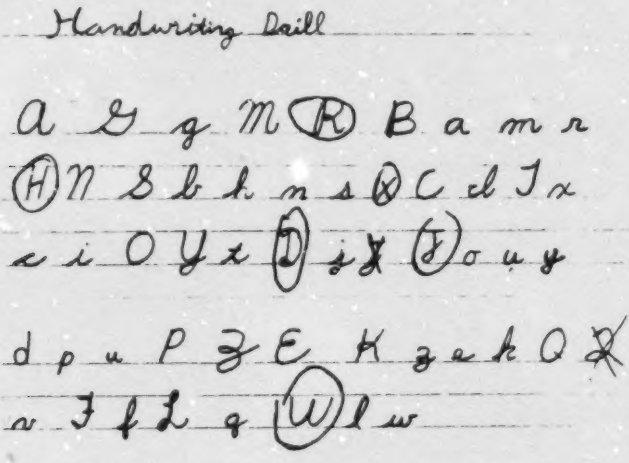
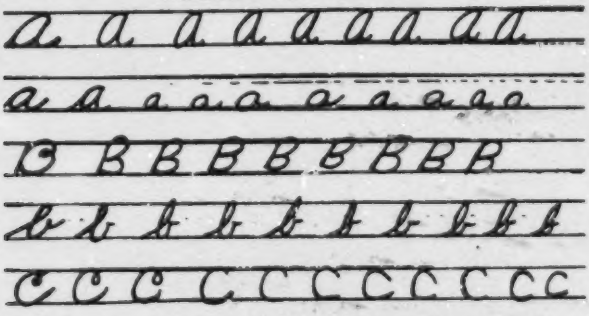
editing phase, or some of the items he must particularly watch for before turning in his next essay.

An easy way to establish what letters students cannot make is simply to give an oral test with randomly selected letters, e.g., "Make a capital *H;* now a small *b,* now a capital *A,* now a small *q,* etc. (see Len's "Handwriting Drill" samples). After taking this test, students circle the letters they did not know and then select "Cursive Letter Practice" sheets to work on (see samples). *

Len's handwriting drill lesson:



Len chooses to do an entire sheet of "Cursive Letter Practice":



*Three publications which I find especially useful for handwriting guidance are *We Teach Handwriting* published by the Seattle Public Schools, Beth Slingerland's *Specific Language Disability Children,* and *The Writing Road to Reading* by Romalda and Walter Spalding.

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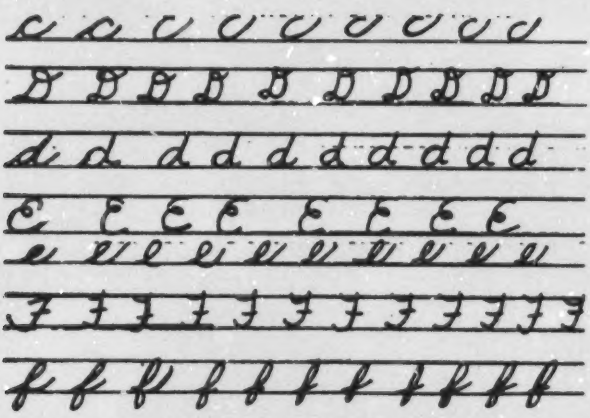
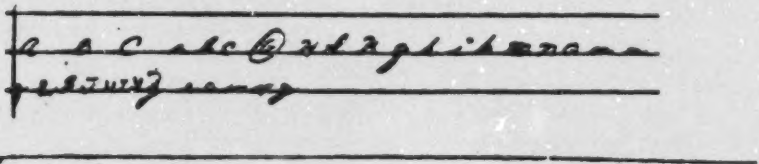
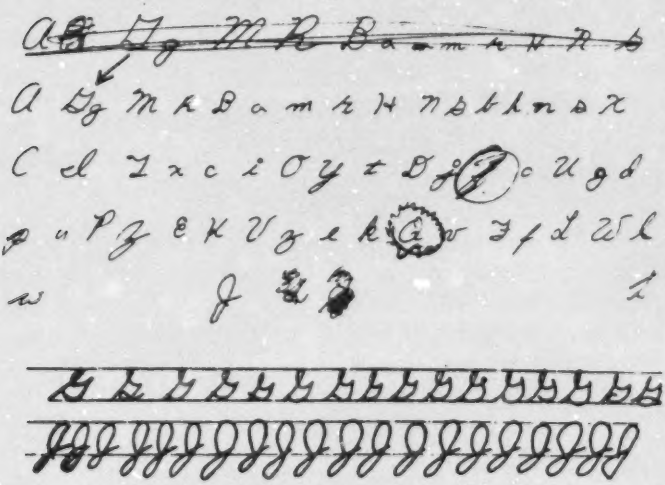


Judy takes the handwriting test and finds she needs to practice the letter *G:*



Don also finds some letters he needs to practice:



For the more seriously disabled, I have made eight and one-half by eleven inch tagboard cards on each of which is drawn one large cursive letter. The student is talked through the letter shape several times as the fore and index fingers trace over the letter shape; e.g., "Start at the top here, come straight down toward the body, circle away from the body, now come 'round toward it again, drop down, swing up away from the body and form the final loop on top for the letter *D*." I may have the student do this exercise with the eyes closed, fixated on a point in the room, or fixated on the sequence, depending on the nature of the learning deficit present. The student then repeats this procedure, talking himself through the sequence by drawing this letter shape on the want ads section of a daily newspaper with a large, black felt marker pen. The newspaper is creased into quarters, the letter drawn as many times as necessary, then other pages creased into eighths as the activity moves from large muscle letter feel to small muscle skill, writing the same letter until an approximately regular-sized cursive letter can be made. Twelve by eighteen inch elementary school newsprint could also be used here, but the students are very sensitive to anything resembling primary school or "baby work" (their term), and as I am very close to this area with these exercises, I feel writing on newspaper helps remove some of the potential stigma of this remediation. Similar exercises at the blackboard, writing in the air, tracing in sand or on the back are all techniques common to this remediation.

At the high school level, it must be kept in mind that many teachers have worked on these remedial skills for years with marginal success. I do not feel inclined to attempt to remediate in one semester every deficient skill that has not lent itself to correction by the efforts of many fine elementary and junior high school techers in the previous five or ten years of special education instruction. My intent is to provide a focus and a way for students who can be convinced they need help to help themselves. Len sees my "help" in a slightly different way. John, a new student, needs handwriting practice. Len notices this need and says, "Mr. Marik, you should make him do the same kinda lessons you made us do!" I find his statement tremendously funny because Len chose the letters he needed to practice after the handwriting drill, then went on to fill two sheets practicing every letter on the sheet. I merely suggested *he* evaluate his own deficits and select the appropriate remedial activity. This suggestion was consistent with the same student-based decision-making process I have used all semester. I did not *make* him, or the others, do much of anything.

When their papers are handed back the final time, a corrective spelling assignment may also be attached to their essays (see "Spelling Checklist," Figure Six).

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SPELLING CHECKLIST (Essay follow-up)

Name: _____ Date: _____ Title: _____

Directions: Select two cards (levels) from each concept number checked on this sheet. Do a "C" level card and try to do an upper level card for your second choice (E-H). Complete the assignment using the dittoed response sheet. Memorize the concept. Hand in the completed work and be prepared to recite the concept to your teacher.

Concept #	Concept I. PHONOLOGY
1	Short a
2	Short e
3 ✓	Short i
4	Short o
5	Short u
6	Hard c
7	Hard g
8	or (cor)
9	er (her)
10	ir
11	ur
12	th
13	Final e
14	Long a
15	ai
16	ay
17	Long e, ea
18	ee
19	Long i
20	ie (pie)
21	Long o
22	or, ore
23	oo (boot)
24	ou (too)
25	gh ,o
26	th, tch
27	th
28	wh :o
29	Final y
30	ea
31	Vowel Influenced by r
32	Soft c
33	Soft g
34	dge, ge
35	oo
36	ow (show)
37	ow (cow)
38	ou (out)
39	oi, oy
40	Long u
41	ew, ue
42	ph as f
43	Other Silent Consonants
44	ie as long e
45	ei as long e and long a
46	gh as f
47	Unusual Spellings
48	Medial y as Vowel Sound
49	Double Consonants
50	Schwa

51	Vowel Review - Short
52	Vowel Review - Long
53	Vowel Review - Mixed
54	Consonant Review

Concept #	Concept II. MORPHOLOGY
55	Suffix - Final Consonant
56	Suffix - Final e
57	Suffix - Final y Rule
58	Suffix -ing (Doubling final consonant)
59	Suffix -ing (Dropping Final e)
60	Suffix -ing
61	Suffix -ing (Roots Ending in ie)
62	Suffix -ing (Roots Ending in ay)
63	Suffix -er
64 (1-7)	Suffixes - Making New Words
65	Prefixes
66	Compounds
67 (1-2)	Roots
68	Plurals - Adding -s or -es
69	Plurals - Changing f and fe to v
70	Plurals - Changing y to i
71	Plurals - Words Ending With o
72	Plurals
73	Syllables - v-c-c-v Pattern
74	Syllables - Dividing Between Double Letters
75	Syllables v-c-v Pattern

Concept #	Concept III. SYNTAX
76	Homonyms
77	Synonyms
78	Antonyms

Concept #	Concept IV. WRITING CONVENTIONS
79	Capitalization
80	Abbreviations
81	Apostrophe - Possessives
82	Apostrophe - Contractions
83	Hyphen

Concept #	V. ADDITIONAL CONCEPTS
84	Latin Origins (Morphology)
85	French Origins (Morphology)
86	Blend Words (Morphology)
87	Acronyms (Syntax)
88	Homographs (Syntax)
89	Confusing Pairs
90	Pronouncing Carefully

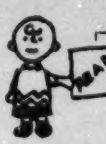
Adapted from: Seattle Public Schools' Individualized Spelling Program. Basic Skills Office, 515 W. Galer St., Seattle, WA 98119

Figure Six

The "Spelling Checklist" form has been adapted from an excellent spelling kit developed under the leadership of Louise Markert in the Basic Skills Office of the Seattle School District. This kit contains seventy-five spelling concepts on individual eight and one-half inch cards. Each spelling concept is explained on three or four different reading levels, letters "A" for the lowest level to "G" or "H" for the highest level. Thus, the high school student with a spelling problem who reads on a second grade level can learn the same spelling concept that troubles the student reading on an eighth grade level. The second grade reader can also do the next higher level as a challenge. He might end on level "C" where the eighth grade reader starts as he also works up to the higher "G" or "H" level. Most of my students can start on the " C" level, and I suggest that as a starting point. Otherwise, some will do the "A" and "B" levels because they are the easiest instead of trying the more difficult levels on which they should be working. (See samples of short "i" lesson, below.)*

Lowest Reading/Difficulty Level A

Short i



A single vowel at the beginning or within a word usually has the short vowel sound.

Examples: it, if, did, fix, brick

A. Write the words which means the opposite of the underlined words. Use these words with the short /i/ sound.

in sit his big chin

1. One is little. One is _____.
2. The cat is out. The cat is _____.
3. I can stand. I can _____.
4. This is here. This is _____.
5. It is thick. It is _____.

brick

B. Write the word that makes sense.

1. A can may be made of it. _____ tan - tin
2. You put it on a jar. _____ led - lid
3. Opposite of little _____ beg - big
4. You take it camping. _____ tire - tent
5. Opposite of dry _____ wit - wet

* Information about this program can be obtained by writing directly to Seattle Public Schools, Basic Skills Office, 515 W. Galer Street, Seattle, WA 98119.

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Intermediate Reading/Difficulty Level C

Short i

A single vowel at the beginning or within a word usually has the short vowel sound.

Examples: it, if, did, fix, brick

A. Write the word to match each picture. Underline the short i you hear in each picture. Use the words below.

robin drip inch dishes

1. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

B. Use these words to answer the questions below.

hitch	drip	tit
still	skip	skin

1. Which word above means to fall in little drops?
2. Which word means very quiet?
3. Which word means to hop from one foot to the other?
4. Which word means to hook a trailer on to a car?
5. Which word means hide of an animal?
6. Which word means a small piece?

Highest Reading/Difficulty Level

Short i

A single vowel at the beginning or within a word usually has the short vowel sound.

Examples: it, if, did, fix, brick

A. Write the following sentences. Underline the words with the short /i/ sound.

1. Did you fix my brick windmill?
2. No, but the twins got rid of the tin blade.
3. They hid it when they slid it under the lid on the bridge.

B. Listen to the vowel sound in each word below. Which word in each group does not belong with the others?

1.	2.	3.
cried	if	rid
lion	tried	lie
mint	pie	winding

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C. Why do these words not belong with the other words in the group?

D. Change the underlined words to make a true sentence about the short vowel. See concept above to help you.

A double vowel at the end or within a word always has the short vowel sound.

E. Copy this rhyme and underline short /i/ sounds.

The wind came up over the hill,
And set the windmill spinning.
The miller tried to fix it,
But he had to wait until
The wind again was still.

Windmill

Self-check answers are on the back of each card.

Answers

A.

1. Did you fix my brick windmill?
2. No, but the twins got rid of the tin blade.
3. They hid it when they slid it under the lid on the bridge.

B.

1. mint 2. if 3. rid

C.

They have a short i. The other words have a long /i/ sound.

D.

A single vowel at the beginning or within a word usually has the short vowel sound.

E.

The wind came up over the hill,
And set the windmill spinning.
The miller tried to fix it,
But he had to wait until
The wind again was still.

Only two bits of knowledge are needed to make this system work: the approximate reading level of a student and specific misspelling patterns identified while reading/correcting an essay. Once a pattern emerges, for example short "i" confusion in Len's paper, number three concept relating to the short "i" is checked on the "Spelling Checklist" form, attached to his essay, and Len goes to the spelling kit, selects

concept three, level "C," and enters his answers on the "Spelling Error Analysis Worksheet" (see sample).

SPELLING ERROR ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Name: Len Essay Title: Rootin Tootin Cowboy
Concept Number: 3 Level: C Date: 11/9/81
Concept Definition: A single vowel at the beginning or within a word usually has the short vowel sound

A.
1. inch
2. dishes
3. robin
4. dril
5.
6.
7.
8.

B.
1. drig
2. still
3. stop
4. bird
5. shin
6. but
7.
8.
9.
10.

C.

In a like manner he goes to a much smaller box of handwriting dittos ("Cursive Practice") and practices a specific letter he has had trouble forming on his final essay. When these are both returned, I grade his paper. These remedial exercises are kept very low-key and are presented as matter-of-fact necessity in relation to the total composing process—something we do now to help us next time. Note that Len still makes some errors on his level "E" corrective lesson. I do not have the *perfect* solution!

2

SPELLING ERROR ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Name: Len Essay Title: Rootin' Tootin Cowboy
Concept Number: E 3 Level: E Date: 11/9/81
Concept Definition: A single vowel at the beginning or within a word usually has the short vowel sound.

A.
1. Did you fix my brick windmill?
2. No, but the twins got rid of their blade.
3. They hid it when they slid it under
4. the bridge.

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B.

1. cried ✓ 6. _____
2. if 7. _____
3. die ✓ 8. _____
4. _____ 9. _____
5. _____ 10. _____

C.

becase they don't have the same i sond

D.

single
beginning
usually

E.

wind, hill, windmill spinning, milk, bin, it, until, wind, still

Brenda's essay:

Billy Jeans accident

Billy Jean has a dream. Her dream is to reach the top,to be a Wimbleton Champion, to go all the way. Billy knows in order to be a champion, she will have to beat a champion.

When Billy was a little girl about five, instead of receiving dolls for her birthday she would receive tennis balls and rackets. When she was about ten, she started taking tennis lessons everyday and going to bed every night at approximately nine o'clock. When she got up in the morning, she would eat a nutritional breakfast, then started training. She would practice her service, backhand, smash, overhand, and underhand.

When Billy was about twelve, her [illegible] was driving her to the tennis courts in Boston to train when a car smashed into the passengers side. The car swirved over towards the curb, flipped once and rolled down a bank near by. Seconds later a crowd formed around the automobile. Someone had called the ambulance. Within seconds, two ambulance arrived at the scene, and parked up on the road. Four paramedics came out running towards the back of the ambulance pulling out one stretcher each, and a box along with some tools. They pushed into the crowd, shoving everybody aside and yelled,"make room, make room." They finally made it to the automobile. The four paramedics

started with their tools and within minutes they had the doors open and pulled out Billy Jean and her mother. They were both unconscious. After wrapping the two on the stretchers, the paramedics rushed them up the hill and into the ambulances. With sirens blaring and the red lights turning, they were rushed to the Boston Hospital. It was a 15 minute drive.

Half way there Mrs. Jean recovered consciousnous. looking up at the paramedics, she started to panic and tried to sit up but she couldn't because she was strapped down

The paramedic said,"It's going to be all right."

"Where's my baby, Where's my baby?," Mrs. Jean cries out.

"She's just fine. She's in another ambulance right behind us, "the paramedic explained.

Meanwhile in Billy Jean's ambulance she was still unconscious. Two paramedics were bent over Billy checking her over, giving her oxygen and taking her pulse. They tore her blue jogging pants to get to her knee which had an ugly wund. The paramedics applied a large gauze bandage over the wund and tapped it up. Other wunds she had were not found until later.

Honking through the intersections and swerving in between cars and trucks, the ambulance finally pulled into the Boston Hospital. Sliding the stretchers out of the ambulance,rushing through the emergency doors, they arrived at the emergency room. Immediately the doctors on duty started checking Billy Jean over. Billy Jean finally came too. As she slowly opened up her eyes the first thing she saw was five doctors and nurses with masks over their mouths looking down on her. As she looked around she could hear foot steps, talking, and clanking of bottles.They just realised Billy Jean was conscious and before she could say anything a nurse was there to hold her hand and to calm her down by saying,"your Mother's fine. She is in the emergency room right next to you and your going to be a little sore but everything is going to be allright."

After being in the emergency room for approximately two hours, they rolled her down the hall through some folding doors and down some more halls until they reached a cold room which they called an X-Ray room. It took four Technitions to pick her up carefully and lay her on a counter with something like cameras over head. As Billy was laying there not being able

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to move her head because she had whiplash, she glanced out the corner of her eye and was told to lay still. X-Rays were being taken of her bone structure. If she moved they would have to start all over again. That made Billy nervous because she was so much in pain she felt like she was twitchy all over. As she laid there the X-Ray Technition would position Billy and tell her to stay. After positioning the camera and focusing it, he would press the botton which took the X-Ray.

Being in the cold X-Ray room, they rolled Billy down dark and gloomy halls and into the elevator pressing floor two where they kept the recovery patients. There was'nt any room for Billy at the time,so they parked her on the right side of the hall and said,"there will be a room ready soon."About an hour later Billy woke up in her room.

Billy's bed had a sling coming from the ceiling for her right broken leg, and a sling for her right broken arm, and a cast on her left knee, and left shoulder.

The doctors expected her to remain in that position for three weeks. But after a week in ahalf Billy Jean was exercising on her own and feeling good again. The doctors were amazed at her fast recovery so they checked her out of her room in two weeks instead of three weeks

One month later Billy Jean was on the courts in Boston, practicing her every day rutene.

By the time Billy was fifteen she was playing in the terniments and was winning. A week later she was on a bus to Wimbliton were she was going to school and training with a new coach who was twice as hard as her first coach. She moved up to the Semi finals and than the big day came when she was playing the champion, Virgina Wade from England.

In the first set Virgina Wade came on strong and won the first two sets out of six. Billy Jean knew in order to win Virgina I have to give it all I have. Billy one the third set and was trying for the fourth when she went up for a smash and fell hard on her knee. The crowd stood, there was silence among everybody. Billy got up on her feet wanting to finish. Virgina won the forth set, she thought she had it easy because Billy was hurting in the shoulder, and limping on her left knee. Before you knew it Billy made a vantastic come back and won six to five. The crowd was

shocked. Her mother who had recovered from the accident was there along with her father congratulating Billy after the last point was won they were all crying with happiness. Billy is awarded the silver placque the crowd quiets down as it is handed to her, her last words were,"Thanks Mom and Dad. And so ended Billy Jeans great remarkable come back. She is now a Wimbliton Champion.

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Brenda's essay:

A special person

The person I remember most in my life is my Grandma L.

For example- On special accasions, like birthdays, she would always send a birthday card to all her grand kids with 5.00 in side. For Christmas she would always decorate her house and invite everybody over and we would all have gift exchange and eat a Christmas dinner, everybody would have drinks or punch in their hands (she was a very happy lady).

Her husband Glenn L (which was my Grandpa) was really spoiled by ~~Hoots~~ Grandma she was always there when he wanted her. For example- anytime his glasses would fog up she was there with a cleanex to clean them. She never let him or us down in any way.

She was special to all of us (relatives). Until one day when Grandpa and Grandma were in California on vacation. Grandma had just called long distance and talked to my mom for a few minutes.

Grandpa and Grandma had just ate with two elderly people at a hamberger joint. As Grandpa and the older man was paying for the bill, Grandpa told Grandma to walk ahead because the lady she was with was going blind and was a little slower than anybody

else. Half way up the street Grandma and her friend was almost at their trailer court. A car came out of a gas station burning rubber a young guy driving with is girl friend, on the wrong side of the street, no head lights, the car hit my Grandma and her friend from the back, throwing them forward 100 ft killing them instantly. My Grandpa was still in the hamberger joint when he heard a a loud collision. He knew Grandma was close to the collision he heard, so he ran out of the hamberger joint and up to my Grandma who's neck was severed and other parts of her body was scattered. He knew she was dead but didnt want to believe it, so he tried scraping her up off the pavement crying, "dont die on me, dont die". The cops first grabbed my Grandpa and gave him two tranquilizers and ~~told~~ told him to go to bed. After the collision the ~~car~~ ~~head~~ driver immidiatly pulled over to the right side of the street. As the newspaper had said, "Two ~~drunk~~ drunkin ladies were staggering in the streets and had jumped in front of the car. So ~~they~~ the driver got off scott free.

All of our relatives and friends say," even though Grandpa is still alive and married, mentally he died. Now we ~~never~~ never get any ~~the~~ birthday cards or never celebrate any special accasions.

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Jim's essay:

Salmon packing in Alaska

Some people think that it is easy to go fishing in alaska during the summer but it realy isn't as easy as thay think so.

They might think that all you do is go up their and get out your fishing pole bait there hook and cast it in the water.

But it isn't that easy at all because you got to put on your chilling system and you also got to put on your trailers scails and get your food before you are ready to go on your trip to alaska.

But you also got to bring the things you need to wear and whoat ever els you want to bring with you when you go on your trip then you are ready to go at last.

It will take you about three or four days to get their on your boat with all your stuff aboard that you need with you or you wanted to bring with you.

Then when you get up their you then find if your scales are right or not but if it isn't they will get you a new on or fix your old one that you brought with you from seattle and then you wait for the schedual to come out for that week that is posted at the office where you are staying at.

Then when they post it you go up and find

out where they are going to send you to go out there sit and wait for the fishing boats to come bring there fish to your boat and go anchor there boat up for the night then in the morning they will go out and get some more fish for so on untill it is time to go to the cannery to deliver the fish in.

Then you wait around for the few days and do whoat you need to do on your boat when they are at the cannery for the few days or doing whoat you want to around there.

Then when they get the schedual made out of there all the boats are supposed to go to like out to nois island or some other place to go.

Then at the end of your two months you will be on your way home.

Jim does not believe in wasting periods or sentences, so uses only one per paragraph.

Don's Paper

Perhaps as significant as being able to sustain interest in an extended piece of writing are the processes used to compose or put together chunks of thought. Don's first hand-written draft contains the subject divided into two main areas, the interior and exterior of the customized truck. He soon realizes that if he is to generate a longer piece, he will need some plan because the sequence of information presented does not, in his own words, "seem to make any sense." Therefore, on the upper left hand corner of his paper he starts to "outline" or break his subject into subdivisions "interior, exterior, front end, back end, engine, body, trans (transmission)." After producing some four hundred words, he begins again, this time not trying to stick to his outline, but writing whatever chunks of information come to him as he thinks through various steps of the customizing process. He achieves some paragraph unity along the way by using a short sentence or phrase at the beginning of each paragraph, and decides to type his essay using one of the five old manual typewriters I have in the room. I am curious about how much some special education students can write when given time to pursue an

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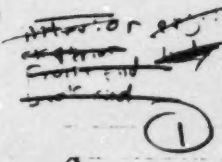
interest, unconstrained by trying to squeeze everything into one semester. Thus, Don, along with Judy and Cathy, is given some time second semester to finish his work. He proceeds laboriously to peck at the keys, one finger, one letter at a time. Four thousand words later he is finished, then does a most surprising thing.

Don goes to the opposite side of the room where I have a large table parallel to the windowed wall that overlooks the inner courtyard. He spreads out his typed sheets and begins to cut them in strips, rearranges the order, and pastes paragraphs according to how he *now* perceives the subject lends itself to form and order (see the page which follows the rough handwritten draft). Where have I seen a similar activity before? In the Autumn Walk paper where we clustered strips into common categories to see relationships, then outlined the material after it was drafted. He has learned it! He has also learned to delay his characteristic impulse to rush through an assignment and turn it in. Most importantly, whereas he previously stuck the introduction in the middle of his essay and copied identical paragraphs to give the impression of a long written effort, he is now striving for quality, for craftsmenship, for pride. I notice that later in the year, and the next, whenever he is challenged as to his academic success, he responds by saying, "Yeah, but *you* never wrote a four thousand word essay!" I'll be willing to bet that Don will remember this effort the rest of his life.

His final activity is a triumph of persistence as he retypes (with some help), the entire essay (see pages which follow the paste-up sheet). I drive to a local Copy Mart, make a copy of all the essays, glue each sheet on to stiffer tagboard and mount them all on the classroom wall, each sheet side-by-side, high above the typewriters. I place the authors' names in large red letters, with, in Don's case, the notation, "4,000 words!" Other essays are similarly mounted, with no problems of overt jealousy or envy. They have all given it their best shot. Now what did I say in Chapter Two about how special education students lack the ability to concentrate on academics for anything but short time periods? Forget it!



the customized truck

Customizing the interior of a 55 ford pickup to make the cab look good, carpet the roof, floor and the back of the cab to look good. Then put in two buckets seats and a [illegible] for speed, many of the kids do dash, first take it all out to specialize all the knobs and put in knews ones. To make the cab look better, put in a shelf right in front of the window on the roof.

Customizing the exterior of a truck. First put in bigger bolts under the bed so the front end will go up and down. Then paint all the nuts and bolts and the name Ford on the tail gate. After doing all that is the hard part of the truck. To make the hard part look alot better. Then put in [illegible] in the front of the truck so it too will go up and down.

After doing all the extra things get a certain color if you want to make the body look good. Then the body painted blue and get blue pen stripes going all down the sides of the truck and on the hood, roof and the tail gate.

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Customising A 1955 Ford Pick-up

Customising the interior of a 1955 Ford pick-up. To make the cab look good, carpet the roof, doors, floor, and the back of the cab for good looks. Then put in two bucket seats and a console for beer, rum, money, and the pink slip. To do the dash, first take it all apart to repair all the broken pieces or put in all new ones. To make the cab look even better put in a shelf in place of the sun visor to hold all of the stereo equipment, or tapes. Also the cab has to have the right dimensions of the carpet to do the cab right. Also try to get a custom steering wheel or get a small dragster steering wheel.

Put in velvet curtins in the cab of the truck.Get the ones that are made out of crush velvet or just plane velvet.First put up the curtin rods then make the velvet curtins the right size so it will cover the hole window in back.Then put up the velvet curtins on the rods first take the rods down so it will be no trubel putting up the velvet curtins in.If it was already in the cab "it would take twice the time if it was done with the rods out of the cab before the velvet curtins was on.

Install a amp for the stereo.The amp is made so the music will be louder.If the stereo is on 20 then turn on the amp on on hafe way the amp will blow the speakers roll fast.

Put a reading light on the dash for reading notes. First wire it to a hot wire leading to the battery. Then have it glued to the dash of the steering column for the best light for reading and writing notes.

Having a police scanner in the cab.It's better to have one of those because then iy can tell where the police are all the time and where all the road blocks are.If it's not in the truck the police can stop or pull over the truck at any time the police wants too.

Install a custom dash. Take out the stock dash so the custom dash will fit in just right.Try to get a custom dash that hole's swiches for the R.P.M.,M.P.G.,WATER,OIL,LIGHTS, and a place for the fog lights and the road lights and for the dome light too.The hidroles and air jacks swiches should be right by the fog light swich.

Installing a VHF or a CB. For the money, install both the VHF and the CB. Put the VHF under the dash so no one can see it because the VHF is a lot of money to put into a toy. Install the CB shelf that is on the roof. The CB is mostely just for a talk to anybody if you are in trouble or if their is an emergency, like if your car is on fire or you run out of gas.

Put in a coin box for lose change.Get one that will hold around 30.00 dollers in dimes or 50 pices

Customising A 1955 Ford Pick-up

Customizing a 55 Ford truck is really hard to do. It takes a lot of money, time, and patience. Some of the work should be done by a professional but it can be done by the owner of the truck.

Customising the interior of a 1955 Ford pick up. To make the cab look good, carpet the roof, doors, floor, and the back of the cab for good looks. Then put in two bucket seats and a console for beer, rum, money and the pink slip. To do the dash, first take it all apart to repair all the broken pieces or put in all new ones. To make the cab look even better put in a shelf in place of the sun visor to hold all of the stereo equipment or tapes. Also the cab has to have the right dimensions of the carpet to do the cab right. Also try to get a custom steering wheel or get a small dragster steering wheel.

Put in velvet curtains in the cab of the truck. Get the ones that are made out of crush velvet or just plain velvet. First put up the curtain rods then make the velvet curtains the right size so it will cover the whole window in back. Then put up the velvet curtains on the rods. First take the rods down so it will be no trouble putting up the curtains. If it was already in the cab, it would take twice the time if it was done with the rods out of the cab before the velvet curtains were on.

Install an amp for the stereo. The amp is made so the music will be louder. If the stereo knob is on 20 then turn on the amp on half way the amp will blow the speakers real fast. Put a reading light on the dash for reading notes. First wire it to a hot wire leading to the battery. Then have it glued to the dash of the steering column for the best light for reading and writing notes.

Have a plice scaner in the cab. It is better to have one of those because then I can tell where the police are all the time and where all the road blocks are. If it's not in the truck the police can stop or pull over the truck at any time the poice want to.

Install a custom dash. Take out the stock dash so the custom dash will fit in just right. Try to get a custom dash that has switches for

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R.P.M., M.P.G., water, oill, lights, and a place for the fog lights and the road lights and for the dome light too. The hydraulic and air jacks switches should be right by the fog light switch.

Installing a VHF or a CB: For the money, install both the VHF and the CB. Put the VHF under the dash so no one can see it because the VFH is alot of money to put into a toy. Install the CB shelf that is on the roof. The CB is mostly just for a talk to anybody if you are in trouble or if there is an emergency like if your car is on fire or you run out of gas.

Put in a coin box for loose change. Get one that will hold around $30.00 in dimes or 50 cent pieces.

Have a mural on the back of the cab window. Try to get a mural that has a picture of a 1955 Ford Pick-up or a picture that has a mural of a 1955 Ford Panel Truck on it. Either of these will look the best on the trucks back window.

Put velvet on the doors. First put foam on the whole door, then put the velvet over the foam after that, staple down the velvet real tight so it will not come apart. It will stay tight all the time if it is tight in the first place.

Installing a stereo in the dash: First the old FM-AM will have to come out so the new stereo can fit in the dash. Putting speakers in the in the truck: For the best sound, put the woofers in the back of the truck, so the sound will come out of the seats. Put the tweeters on the doors or on the roof or maybe put them on the dash.

To put in a custom headrest in the cab: First, the seats, speakers and custom ice box has to come out of the cab. Then the headrest can be put in but get the right size headrest for the cab. For example, try to get one that will be tight on the inside of the cab. Or get the smaller size of headrest to put in the cab. The smaller headrest will look better in the cab because there will be enough room for other items like a fire extinguisher in the back of the cab or on the side of the cab.

Install a P. A. system in the dash of a '55 Ford Truck that is customised: First thing to do is make a hole right by the V.H.F. under the dash. After putting the P. A. mike under the dash, then put the P. A. speaker in

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the engine compartment right by the burglar alarm horn on the fire wall.

Install a holder for beer or soft drinks. The best place for the holder is right in the center of the dash or under the key starter in the dash.

Install a musical horn on the steering wheel. For the best reach, first take off the old horn and then put on the musical one. Be sure it is the right size or it will wreck the steering column.

Installing dome lights in the back corners of the cab: First, wires have to be led behind the carpet and under the seats up to the switch that is in the dash. Then the wire has to go to the battery. The dome lights will look like the old coach lights that were on the outside of the coaches in the 1890's or early 1900's.

Install a full auto stop cassett player in the dash or on the sheet. First wire it real good so it will not get any static interference from motorcycles revving up their engines at a stop light.

Install power windows for opening and closing faster. First take the inside panel off, then take out the window that rolls up and down by hand. Then put the motor for the power window in. Then put the window back in. The switch should go on the panel after the switch is in. Then put the panel back on the door. The wire has to go to the battery.

A custom clock that has the month, date, hour, second and year will look good right beside the fog light switch in the dash.

Install a burglar alarm on the doors and hood of the truck. It is a good idea to have one so no people can take things from the truck and not get caught in the process of the robbery.

Install a pair of gun racks on the back wall of the cab. Get one that will hold about three guns, two shotguns and one rifle or just three shot guns.

Inside of the cab put on arm rests on the seats. Get ones that can fold up and down.

Put a small dash calendar in the cab of the truck for appointments.

Customising the exterior of a 1955 Ford Pick-up: First put in hydeaulic jacks under the bed so the front end will go up and down. Then chrome all the nuts, bolts, hinges and the Ford on the tailgate.

Have a set of custom mirrors on the side fo the truck for good looks and so the truck will look like a dream. Try to get mirrors like the ones on Camaros or the ones on the GTO or Datsun. The ones like the GTO will look best on the truck.

Getting the bumpers redone on the truck: First take off the bumpers. Then sand off the rust and other junk so when they get rechromed they will look a lot better than before they were redone.

After doing all that then do the front end ofthe truck to make the front look a lot better than before. Then put in custom hinges in front of the carburator. Put the hinges right in the center of the frame so the hood will go up and down with no trouble at all. After doing all that work on the exterior, then get a custom paint job. To make the body look like a fortuen. To make the truck look even better get it painted blue and get blue pin stripes down the side of the truck and on the hood and the roof and on the tail-gate.

Getting the right rims for a 1955 Ford pick-up. Personally Gregors rims are as good pair of mags for a truck. The owner of the truck has gregors rims on his truck to make the truck look good. Then most of the 1955 Ford Pick-up's has defret mags on their trucks. If the truck looks good maybe it can be put in the custom auto show.

Install a black tarp on the bed of the truck. The tarp is made out of a canvas to make the truck look better and to keep the bed from rusting out from the rain. The tarp is fastened down with 18 snaps. The snaps on the tarp are on the sides and the back and front also.

Putting in running lights on the back axel. People like to show off their cars and trucks. They look good under the car or truck or whatever you might have for a automobile.

Putting in a roll bar in a 1955 Ford pick-up. First, the bed has to have eight holes in it so the roll bar will fit right in the holes in the bed. Make sure the bolts are tight or the roll bar will come out of the bed.

Getting the right tires for the truck. For the best looks try to get 80's for the back of the truck and try to get 40's for the front of the truck. The 80's are about 28 inches high and the 40's are about 25 inches high. Also the 80's are about 15 inches across, the 40's are about 11 inches across.

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Putting in a custom engine in a Ford Pick-up. First put in the transmission then put the oil pan then the rest of the engine. The engine should go in with no trouble at all. Then the motor mounts have to go in after that then the radiator goes in and after that the oil has to be put in the engine before the engine is turned over. Also, the fan belts have to be very tight, or the engine will overheat and the block will crack. Make sure the fan is tight too, and the bolts and nuts also.

Doing the suspension of a 1955 Ford-Pick-up. To make the pick-up look like a real jewel. First take off the shocks and get the heavy duty shocks springs crome and get the axel crome too since the shocks are of you might as well get the axel and the leaf springs crome too. Also start on croming the front end of the truck. Get the whole front suspension all cromed and get the radiator cromed too. Also get the manifold and the frame cromed.

Having side steps on the truck will make it worth more money when it is sold. Putting in the side steps are pretty easy if they are put on by a professional they know how to put them on right. Or get a friend to help you to put them on so the person who owns the truck. Only one thing that is hard to do is getting them on right if they are boat to be under the cab not back by the wheel.

Place a piece of plastic on the tail-gate. First take off the tail-gate and the hinges. Then take off the pieces of metal on the edge so the piece of plastic can fit in right. Get a piece that has been tinted a grayish black. Get the piece of plastic edges smooth so it will not chip off the paint on the tail-gate and on the crome on the bumper.

Putting in the sun-roof on a 1955 Ford-pick-up. When it is being put in. When the sun roof is out of the box the sun roof comes with a piece of paper so the sun roof will go right in the hole with no trouble at all. But if the roof is cut wrong, the sun roof will leak water or the hole will rust and that will make the truck look bad.

Installing fog lights and road lights. Putting in fog is a pain in the but. First it needs a good place for them. The perfect pace is on the role bar. It's high in the air so they will not come off the truck if the truck hits a bump or a rock. If they are on the bumpers they will come off when the truck hits a bump.

Getting the license that has been custom made for the 1955 Ford pick-up. Try to get one that has the name Ford or the one that has the name back! Or even the one that says "Custom" on it. To make it look nice get on that has a persons name on it like Fred, Frank or maybe one that has your name on it.

Put on a locking gas cap for pertaction. Get one thaat has a cover over the key hole so the key hole will not rust.

Installing a push-bar on the front of the truck. The only thing that will be a problem is getting it centered on the bumper. After that it will be easy to put on the truck. If it is not so heavy it will be a fast job.

Get the name Ford F/100 on the hood chromed on each side. Getting the names on the side chromed is a lot of hard work. They have to be custom made so the chrome will not get on the rest of the hood. If this is done right the truck will look really good.

Making a platform for the truck. First make the platform then get a big piece of mirror so when it is in the custom truck show the people can see the bottom of the truck to see all the equipment on the truck thaat was put on.

Put on backup lights on the back corners of the bed. First drill the holes for the brackets that will be installed on the bed. Then wire the lights to the cab and then to the battery.

Put airhorns on the inside of the engine compartment. The best one's to get are the one's that are on the rigs. Those are the best one's to get for the sound on fogy nights.

Put air shocks between the back axel and frame so the truck will be jacked up in the back and get good gas mileage. Having air shocks in back makes the front end heavier and the back end lighter. That's so the back axel has to work less than if there was no air shocks.

Having a pair of road lights on the truck will make it easier to see when it is rainning or snowing or if it is coming down like sleet. They work best when it is snowing hard. Or if the rain is coming down hard.

Install a custom canopy. Try to get one that flares in the back on a 45 -degree angle and slants backwards in front. Get one that is made out of metal frame and sheetmetal topside.

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Install an air scoop under the front bumper. First get the right size to fit under the bumper. Then bolt it in four places, one on each side and two in the middle of the air scoop.

Put in two hooks on the front bumper for towing something forward while the truck is going backwards.

Install a power winch on the front of the front bumper. Get a 5 ton electric winch to pull anything out.

Include a portable tire holder in the bed of the truck. For good looks get it chromed so when the tire is on it, it will make the tire rim much better than if it was on a holder that was painted blue or another color.

Install a custom air cleaner holder for the engine. Get one that is long and not too wide. The best one is 23 inches long and about 11 inches wide. After that get the holder chromed.

Getting the front grill repaired so it will look new. First get the same year of truck so it will look and fit the same like the old one.

Put on a pair of mud flaps on the back fenders. Get one's that say "stay clear, my rear is near" or the name Ford on it in big letters in black or white.

Chroming parts of the engine and trany. First the engine has too come out. Then take it all apart so the pieces of the engine so the engine can be chromed right. The ones that can be chromed have to be cleaned. Smoothe chrome will stay on the engine.

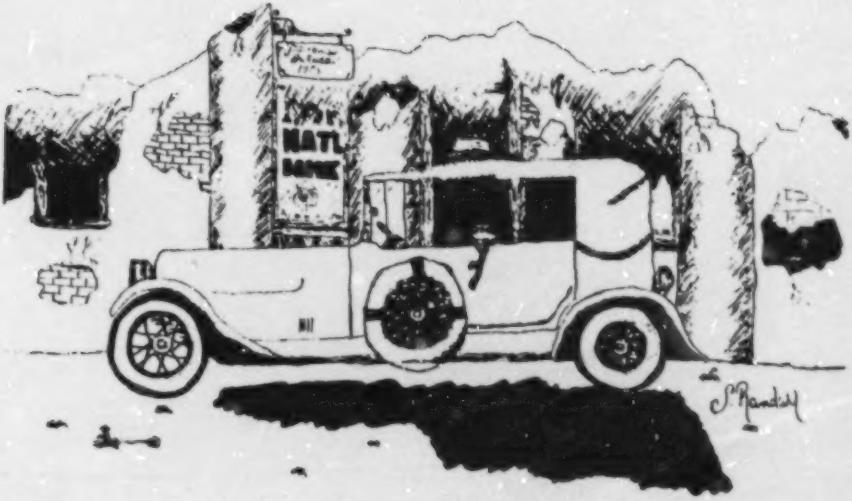
Install chrome parts saying Ford in the center. First drill four holes in the back of the side steps. Then put on the chrome plate and then bolt it down by the bolts and nuts that come with the plates. But tighten them down so they will not come off, and make the truck look awkward having just one not two.

Chrome the heads on the custom engine on a customized truck. First, the engine has to come out so the engine block will not get a lot of scratches on it. After getting the engine out so the engine compartment with the hoist then take off the heads with a rachet wrench. Next, the heads have to be cleaned so the chrome will stay on when the heads get hot from the engine block after driving the truck for a long time.

Having a cromed gas petal that is shaped for your foot. Only thing that will be a problem is getting the same size of the hole that holds the gas petal down to the floor. Also try to get a brake and a emergency brake too that is chromed.

Chrome the metal stripe around the windows. First, before that gets done the metal stripe have to come off so they will get chromed right so they will look like a piece of plastic.

Chrome the custom headrests that are made for a 1955 Ford Truck. Then install them. They will not get scratched if they are put in last. If they are put in last they will be too hard to bolt down behind the seats because it will be difficult to get them in the cab.



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VI

Silent Rage

As previously noted, the special education student has formidable, but not entirely insurmountable difficulties in learning composition skills. Looking beyond the narrow confines of the classroom, there are other exterior or more global factors which seriously affect the learning process. Some of the main ones are attendance, aggression and drug related violence, pregnancy, abortions, and miscellaneous personality problems.

I rank poor attendance as the most serious problem the special education student has in benefiting from classroom instruction. It is easy to imagine how hard it must be to attend a class and for days understand very little of what is being presented. However, if within the student is more steel than jello, a little capacity to hang in there despite frustration, to withhold snap judgments and stop looking for reasons not to attend or to resist participating, his chances for academic progress dramatically improve. Just being present, of course, is no guarantee of success, and I have known incredibly unenlightened administrators who would return to the classroom, time and again, students who were overtly hostile to the teacher and to classroom instruction. Disruptive students do not have the right to disrupt others who are trying to learn.

Darrell and two other boys suspended from different high schools in the city are scheduled into my classroom nearly two months late for a good start in composition. They stick around about two weeks, are frequently tardy, absent, always behind, and finally drop out. Frank, another occasional student, misses forty out of ninety days, spends some time in Juvenile Center for robbery, and generally does nothing of value in class. Paul continues his pattern of tardies and absences. Shirley, a stunning beauty of movie star quality, misses approximately thirty five days, including two weeks for an excusable medical problem. All could make progress in school and in writing if only they would stop self-destructing at critical times in their lives.

Butch is suspended from school for fighting and I play an unwilling

part in his ultimate disappearance. One day after lunch I routinely leave the faculty room en route to my classroom. I open the door and am met by an outer wall of bodies circling two students fighting in the middle of the hall. I foolishly throw myself between the fist-swinging antagonists and break it up. I am compelled to take Butch into the office and report the fight. This incident, when coupled with his general lack of progress in all school subjects, probably explains his dropping out of school.

Don's aggression at the beginning of the year is of another kind. At the start of every class period, he unleashes a fusillade of abusive, derogatory comments to anyone he chooses, escalating the verbal war to one step short of physical blows. He emits "farting" sounds from his lips and punctuates his remarks with an occasional flash of the infamous one-finger salute. After everyone is sufficiently stirred up and angry, he retreats to me and insists just as vociferously that we start our writing assignment. Short of taking a baseball bat to his skull, I am unable to stop him from these daily attacks on his classmates. I have used all of my marvelous, masterful, behavior-control techniques on him, without effect, except one. I patiently wait for an opening that is as predestined to happen as anything Shakespeare could conceive on or off the stage.

The opportunity is not long in coming. One day a senior boy a foot taller and nearly one hundred pounds heavier chases him into my classroom just before the period begins. Don predictably does not have the good judgment and social awareness to back off, but rather stupidly keeps on spewing out insults to this non special-education student. He is saved by the bell and by the common sense of the other student, who masters his anger long enough to listen to my arguments on the benefits of a non-violent resolution of this conflict on his plan to graduate this year. Outwardly, Don views the senior's departure as if he has won. He has not and I think he knows it. I take him to one side and point out that in senior high school, if he continues his line of attack, he can get seriously hurt because students here are so much bigger than those he argued with in junior high. He does not openly concede my point, but listens attentively. I notice with relief and encouragement his verbal attacks now become less vitriolic. Whenever appropriate I praise him for his discretion and self-control. He responds, and will occasionally remind me when he feels I've not noticed his restraint by saying, "See Mr. Marik, I didn't say anything *that* time!" I praise him again and we quite naturally and inobtrusively form a friendly bond of common interest over his increasing ability to control his offensive behavior.

My system for encouraging good behavior is based on observation, patience, opportunity and timing. I know this method runs counter to the thrust of thinking in our district. We are directed to expend time

writing out behavioral goals and objectives and revising them continually to respond to a preconceived plan of control. This system probably works for many. The problem I have with it is that though the plan and teacher are ready, frequently the student is not. Hence, much effort is expended with little permanent change. However, if a teacher listens carefully and observes sharply, there will be a moment when environmental factors compel student interest to be concentrated on their unacceptable behavior. It is then, with a well-chosen phrase or short conference, the most significant progress can be made. My timing is not always perfect, but when it is on target, I know this is part of the stuff out of which is made the great teachers of the world.

Cathy, a young innocent teenage spirit, struggles against the black heart of human nature. She arrives in my class sweet, shy, friendly, and to all appearances a sheltered flower carefully blooming into womanhood. Her folder notes she has been a battered child. For this reason, I interpret her unconscious "fingering" or playing with objects as a working out of stresses still in the system, much as overheated metal will twist and move while cooling. One day during our individual conferences, she has dog-eared several papers on my desk, wadded a six inch piece of masking tape into a ball, then started clicking staples out of the stapler, all while apparently concentrating on our conversation about her essay. I gently take the stapler out of her hand, she blushes, pauses, and says, "Mr. Marik, I don't want to go home."

"Why?"

"My mom beats me." She continues quietly to confess that her departure to school every day is marked by physical violence. She says her mother slaps her in the face at the slightest provocation.

I ask, "What do you do then?"

She answers, "Nothing. There is nothing I *can* do because she will beat me until I am down on my knees. And when I come home from school, I have to do all the housework."

"But don't you have an older brother who is home all day? Can't he help out?"

"If I don't do everything, he and my younger brother beat me too!"

"Cathy, are you telling me the truth?"

"*Honest,* Mr. Marik!" Her eyes widen and voice rises. "My mother laughs at this. They take belts and beat me! If my mom told my older brother to kill me, he would!"

The teenage mind is frequently given to overexaggeration, and experience tells me it is wise to get both sides of the story, or refer a problem of this nature to someone who has both the time and expertise

to resolve a complicated issue. I also know that what is teenage life-and-death on Monday is "fine" on Tuesday. I decide to wait a few days to see what will happen.

Cathy is absent the next day, and on the third day Jenny, another special education teacher, tells me she took Cathy home overnight because Cathy had spent the entire previous night wandering the streets, refusing to go home. Jenny contacts a social worker and between them they convince Cathy to return home for the time being. Cathy describes the incident which resulted in her leaving home. It was over a hair style.

By previous arrangement, a woman from her church dropped by the house to take her for a haircut. The woman waited in front of the house in a car. Cathy had saved money from baby sitting to pay for this expense. She tried to explain what hair style she wanted, but for reasons unknown to her, her mother and stepfather took violent exception to her attempts to make herself presentable. Her stepfather forbade her to have her hair styled and finally said, "If you don't like what goes on in this house, get the hell out!" Cathy decided she had had enough. She threw a few dresses and other items into a suitcase and headed for the door. Her mother grabbed the suitcase. It broke open, spilling everything on the floor. Cathy was knocked down. She got up, tried to get the suitcase back, but her mother pulled it away and flung it into the room. She picked up one dress and a pair of shoes, took aim, and threw the dress and shoes at Cathy, hitting her in the face.

Her mother yelled, "Get the hell out of this house." Cathy ran out the door and into the waiting car.

She said, "There is no way I'm going back into that house. I'll kill myself first!" She got her hair styled, stayed overnight with the woman who took her to the beauty shop, came to school the next day, then roamed the streets all night before coming to school the next day. Jenny took her home that night. It's not hard to conclude that there is something more here than an overwrought teenage imagination. I notice Cathy has chewed every fingernail down to flesh. There is more to come.

I almost wish I had not received that phone call which, months later, wakes me up from a sweaty sleep, my heart pounding hard against the rib cage. The call is from a parent. "Do you know that Caldwell has been sexually involved with special education girls?

"Oh my god! No!"

"It's all coming out!"

"Who?"

"We can't be sure just yet."

"How do you know this is true?"

"One of the girls is pregnant and told the whole story."

"How many girls?"

"We don't know—possibly all of them." We talk several more minutes, and I try to reconcile the improbable match-up between the brutish, violent, dangerous Caldwell who had burst into my classroom last fall, and the vulnerable, impressionable girls in my class. I am sickened by the possibility. We conclude our conversation. I try to think that maybe it is not true, but I dread the next day, for the truth must be ferreted out.

One-by-one the girls are taken from my classroom and from other classrooms in the school and questioned. The authorities are present. It is determined the problem is probably not as wide spread as originally feared. However, enough corroborative evidence is produced that charges are filed.

Judy, Cathy's closest friend, reports frequent harassment while the case is being scheduled into court. Her dog is let out of the yard twice, picked up by the pound,and she has to rush down and get it out before it is disposed of. While her boyfriend's car is parked in front of her parents' house, a gallon of green enamel paint is splashed on it. At three o'clock in the morning a rock comes smashing through the window. Her brother has just gotten into bed, and quickly gets up to see Caldwell's truck pulling away. One day Judy and Cathy report that while they are walking past Caldwell's house en route to the store, he is on the porch with a pistol in his hand. He tells them, "You both better walk real slow past his house. You got no business being on the street." He leans forward over the porch rail, the large caliber pistol swinging in his right hand like an ominous pendulum marking the seconds between threatened and actual violence. I ask why they walked past his house, knowing the danger involved.

Judy shoots right back. "He don't own the street! I ain't afraid of that old buzzard!" Cathy seconds this bravado. Neither has learned that there are times when it is not prudent to brush fear from its sensible sticking place.

Before the year ends, Caldwell is charged and jailed—statutory rape.

To this day I do not know who all the girls were. I suppose I could dig it up somewhere, but I am having difficulty dealing with what I suspect. I suppose it is sacrilege for an educator to embrace ignorance, but this is one bit of ignorance I can live with.

As I write this, the following school year is barely two months old and more problems emerge. One student has been expelled for carrying

a concealed weapon (a knife with an eight inch blade). During our frequent, almost daily confrontations in the classroom, I wisely maintained my cool—and am here to tell about it. Another student brings very expensive jewelry to school which he stole from a nearby shopping center. He is asked by one of the teachers in our department to give it up. He refuses. The police are called and the descriptions of jewelry seen matches with the list of items stolen. His parents can not be located because they are in the process of moving to another school district. Two days later I finally get their address and phone number. I am not present when they bring their son to school to arrange the return of stolen merchandise with the staff member who has originally seen him with the jewelry. Two policemen are present. It is reported to me that during the meeting the boy's mother turned to him and said, "You know, you're stupid! Really stupid! Bringing that stuff to school!" She didn't say that breaking the law was stupid, that robbery was unacceptable, only that bringing stolen property to school was stupid.

Last Friday one of my teachers was physically attacked and knocked to the classroom floor over the return of a pen. Mrs. K. was attempting to teach class while Marvin, extremely restless, went over to a chess set, took out several pieces, and began throwing them at other students in the room. After several reminders to settle down and knock it off, he was told to leave the room and report to the vice principal. Instead, he went directly outside where he was caught smoking marijuana by another vice principal making his rounds outside the building. His mother was contacted and told that Marvin would be sent home for disturbing the class. A security officer attempted to take Marvin out of the building, but he broke away running.

He circled back and burst into Mrs. K.'s room, headed for her desk, and began rummaging through the drawer for a pen. Mrs. K. immediately went to the wall phone and started to call for help. She saw Marvin grab her pen and start to leave the room. She tried to stop him and found herself screaming, "Give me my pen! Marvin, give me my pen!" Marvin slapped her. She slapped him. He continued his assault, knocking her to the floor, then ran out of the classroom. Mrs. K. reported the assault; the police were called. In the meantime, Marvin was hiding somewhere on the school campus. He returned one last time. He said, "Mrs. K., I'm sorry I did that."

"OK, Marvin, but you will still have to report to the office."

Marvin then yelled, "Give me a pen, you mother fuckin' bitch!" He hurled several more obscenities, then slammed the door and took off running. The police finally caught him and confiscated three large bags of marijuana. He signed a paper admitting he is a drug dealer. In addition, he had also assaulted a teacher and failed to cooperate with school

officials. For all this, his most stinging punishment was being sent home—from whence he came only a few hours later—and from whence he or his juvenile counterpart will emerge again and again to disrupt classes, corrupt classmates, and destroy teachers. A policeman said to Mrs. K., "Lady, there is no amount of money worth what you have to go through!"

Fortunately Mrs. K. was not seriously injured physically, but is the unseen psychological damage from that violence no less serious? I wonder if those who rail against the declining "academic" standards of public school education really understand that in every physical and psychological sense, we frequently operate under conditions of hand-to-hand combat; under conditions of all-out war. Worse, we are given butter to fight guns.

I have acquired two new traits: sharp back pains and dull headaches that last for weeks. It must be stress, but that is not a new feeling, for many times I loaded into a C-119, heavy with live ammunition, rations, and the weapons of war. One thousand feet over the drop zone, the hysterical screams of my buddies drowned out the thundering roar of twin Pratt and Whitney engines. I flung myself out the door, plunging earthward, the wind slipping by my ears cold as death until a sharp spank of silk opened the parachute. I have sailed the great Bering Sea and have seen massive waves come crashing and rolling over the bow, moving like giant green-white fists thrust from the bottom of the world, burying the bow under tons of angry water, driving it so deeply under that aft, the propellers come screaming and twisting out of the water. I remember this awesome mass rushing directly at us, smashing against the pilot house, rolling window-high to look deep into our frightened eyes, then roaring back to tear at the ship's superstructure. Two of us clung to the wheel, feeling the creaking, groaning, and shuddering hull vibrate up through the deck to chatter the teeth in our jaws. Occasionally we were knocked flat to the deck but rose to ride out the blow, finally triumph, and successfully heal our emotional and physical wounds.

But this, this situation of parental abuse, drug-related violence, sexual assault, and continual unknown classroom dangers—how does one deal with an enemy that attacks everywhere at once, twenty-four hours a day, on and off the battlefield? There is no identifiable beginning, or ending,—no victory, only defeat, and a feeling of tremendous vulnerability with a lingering rage that can't turn outward, so festers inward.

This is not the whole story of factors which affect the education of special education students, just a few of the highlights. Nor is it a situation unique to our school. I suspect it is a pattern familiar to many special education teachers in many large urban areas. The unceasing ebb and flow of personalities, problems, new students, returning students,

transfers in and out, sexual activity, violence in and out of the classroom, and general beneath-the-surface stirring and turmoil make the serious teaching of any subject in the special education classroom seem ludicrous at times. I sometimes feel I'm in the middle of Grand Central Station trying to hold a composition class amid the trafficking of passengers as they take a seat and wait for their train to leave. If I would ask these travelers if they had brought a notebook, pen, or pencil with them, they would look at me with the same incredulity I see when I put the same question to some of my students. Several boys saunter into my class with large canvas bags holding a basketball, gym shorts, shoes, and swimming suit, but no books, notebooks, pen, or pencil. Others are simply spectators to the educational processes and just drop in to sit and watch from time to time with no attempt to remember anything or contribute or be prepared prior to class. They don't dislike school, or my class. They don't like school either. It's just something to do, a place to wait until the next train comes along.

Petite notes a similar pattern with remedial students who are promoted up the secondary school chain, graduate, arrive at state universities and open admission schools, "who cannot be depended upon to do even the shortest assignment, not because they are stupid, but because they would rather watch television, drink beer or play cards. Many are just plain lazy." ("Johnny: Portrait of a Self-Made Man," p. 182) Despite these negative influences in and around the classroom, that some do catch on and take to what is being presented is one of the many small but significant miracles that so far keep me coming back day after day, excited about directing the destiny of young, troubled, but willing minds.

Toward a Theory of Composition

Four years ago Ralph Stevens, Assistant Director of the Puget Sound Writing Program, gave our Puget Sound Writing class the assignment to write our theory of composition. I have been conscientiously trying to finish that assignment ever since in relation to my interest in expository writing. Expository writing seems to be essentially a process of extension and/or elaboration of thought along a factual or lineal progression, constrained by a statement of intention or thesis. It has certain prescribed movements like a mating dance ritual. In other words, despite fancy footwork, flapping puffery, and exotic noises from the throat, if you don't make points with your audience, you don't score. I try to convey this idea of structure to my students. But there is more to consider when my special education flock gathers in the classroom.

The on-going psychological set of the student is a factor. I have to take into account what the student is predisposed to hear based on the ten-to-twelve-year residue of classroom instruction. What part of the instructions are students resisting, absorbing, or ignoring? It is here

where the methodological torch, burning brightly in one hand, and passed on, will flicker or die in another. No methodology can stand successfully alone, void of the human interaction of an enthusiastic teacher. I have come to believe that of the two, methodology vs. teacher enthusiasm, even a suspect methodology will work for the excited teacher, but no amount of researched, excellently-prepared material will work in the hands of a boring teacher. Not nearly enough has been said or written about how critically important is teacher attitude when working with special education students. Far too much has been assumed *a priori.* If the special education student sees the composition teacher as just another in a long string of dull instructors, predisposition to resist new learning will prevail over the methodology, however well-organized and researched.

The writing process seems to direct the student inward and outward simultaneously—inward to the semiconscious word selection process; outward on a topic. Perhaps the closer the link between the student's inner experiences and the process of expressive writing, the easier the task. The problem is how to move beyond inner experiences and develop multi-level outward thinking in the handicapped learner. How much capacity for multi-level thinking can be assumed? Donaldson notes that the child comes to school with outward thinking "on the real, meaningful, shifting, distracting world. What is going to be required for success in our educational system is that he should learn to turn language and thought upon themselves." (*Child's Mind,* p. 46) I wonder if years later, at the high school level, we are trying to set the somewhat narrow teenage perceptions of expressive inward thinking into the wider, expository, outward-thinking mode that was common to their childhood thought processes. In some ways, has our K-12 system become too successful in convergent thinking?

An important component of the writing process for special education students is the excitement of talking about a topic that excites them. It seems it must be talked out, the molecules stirred, an emotional interplay which is an essential part of the prewriting process. I hear their dialogue and say, "OK, let's stop talking now and write." Perhaps this is wrong, for I do not know how long to let this prewriting stage go on. Would it automatically lead to writing before the end of the period? I don't think so. I am searching for a critical cresting of the verbalized inventive stage and wondering if there are hierarchical stages of random talk which, when identified, will lead quite naturally to a specific writing process.

There are other considerations related to timing. Charles Ehret's findings (reported by Hilts in "The Clock Within") on circadian cycles should cause composition teachers to regard student performance in less absolutist terms.

> Since so much of the chemistry and biology of the body changes each day, and changes by as much as tenfold, biologists have gradually come to realize that an animal—whether human or guinea pig—is virtually a different creature, physically and chemically, at different times of the day. (p. 62)

In classroom terms, would that first period (7:45 a.m.) composition student failure also be a failure in a fourth period (11:00 a.m.) class? Would some of my strong fourth period composition students also be outstanding at 7:45 a.m.? More work needs to be done in this area, in addition to addressing the question of how valid research is that ignores the biological functioning level of the organism at the time it is being tested. If the implications of Ehret's finding are true, a ten-fold change in the physical and chemical structure of a being suggests research efforts and my classroom conclusions on the composing process may not be very realistic. Freedman and Pringle note, "by insisting that all students write at the same time and in the same place, we are not in fact giving them all equal opportunities; we are favoring those who feel good that day." ("Writing in the College Years: Some Indices of Growth," p. 312)

What then is the optimum time (day or night) to teach specific composing processes? Maybe the question should be ignored like a pesky gnat that buzzes irritatingly near the ear. For the special education student, the damaged and imperfect neurological system is already having difficulty absorbing instruction based on theory of operational and sequential thought processes common to the less disabled student. Add arbitrarily-scheduled times for performance and the problem may well be compounded into predestined failure.

Restak, in *The Brain*, points out the significant differences in the functioning of the male and female brains. Should composition instruction be modified to somehow accommodate these differences, or should that too be ignored? The more I examine the composing process, I wonder if I really understand anything at all. I am no further in completing Ralph's assignment to establish a theory of composition than I was four years ago. The mystery continues to bother me.

Summary Thoughts

Maybe now, after having success with expressing themselves on paper, some will, on their own, continue to improve their writing and the skills of punctuation, spelling, grammar, and handwriting. Already there is some evidence, although there are still enough errors in some of their work to earn an "E" from the conventional error-oriented English teacher. I intend no disrespect, for as I previously mentioned, I am a great believer in educational standards. I am embarrassed that I have no startling breakthrough to report on how to solve this problem. If I've

accomplished anything at all, perhaps it has been to give my students a sense of control over a small part of the composing process.

It is probably all too obvious that I have felt caught in the cross-currents of a dilemma. Do I pull for a 100 percent error-free paper, demand rewrite after rewrite until not one blemish appears on the antiseptic product, and suggest that anything less will result in a main-mast flogging? Do I let go the rudder and suggest that it doesn't matter how many errors there are, or what form the paper takes, just write and whatever comes out is OK with me. "After all, it's the real you!"

I have chosen to guide my little band down the middle of the channel, an oar on either side, trying to steer a course between the two extremes. In so doing, I know well the curses from either shore, and during the long watch, I am tempted to respond to the seductive sirens on the eastern shoal who sing "more freedom" and from the west "more structure." In the end, my uneasy compromise satisfies only myself and my students. Haswell notes, "It is up to teachers and students to decide which maneuvers, out of the scores even one ordinary paragraph yields, should be converted by discussion to tactic and to technique by practice." ("Tactics of Discourse: A Classification for Student Writers," p. 178)

As our little ship nears the debarking ports to next semester's classes, we have lived, laughed, and grown in whatever areas we were able. Some came aboard able to pull a heavier oar, others could steer a course. Still others were on the deck observing the activities around them but never really tried very hard to take their turn at the tiller. In the larger historical-educational stream, it probably has always been thus, and probably always will be. Even for the oar pullers below decks, their efforts are not much to rave about as pieces of flawless writing, but do have relevance to that womb of mute darkness they previously curled up in to avoid the pain of composition ignorance. Don proudly finished his 4,000 word piece on restoring a 1955 Ford pick-up truck (and during his summer vacation expanded it to 10,000 words, see pp. 121-128). Judy wrote between 4,000 and 5,000 words on a murder mystery; Cathy, a cat tragedy over 6,000 words; Ron, an evaluation of TV commercials near 2,000 words; Len, on rebuilding a Camero, over 2,000 words, and a new student, Lisa, just finished her first effort well over 1,000 words. We gaze on these pieces with pride, and they are loved as only a mother or father can love their not so perfect child of birth.

After each semester's work with my special education students, I do know this. It is so hard to generalize and sound profound when all I feel is terribly humble about their written efforts and the tremendous battles that stormed within while what they wanted to say came out to

the surface in the form of curses and demands in the composing classroom. I leave them with some relief, but also with a heavy sadness that comes at the end of a unique experience teachers instinctively know, from semester to semester, will not come 'round quite the same way again.

Resources

Beach, Richard. "Self-Evaluation Strategies of Extensive Revisers and Nonrevisers." *College Composition and Communication,* XXVII (May, 1976), pp. 160-164.

This article compares the way extensive revisers and non-revisers write papers. The groups compared consisted of twenty-six preservice English teachers in a writing methods course, juniors and seniors at the University of Minnesota.

Boning, Richard A. *Capitalization and Punctuation.* New York: Barnell Loft, Ltd., 1974.

An excellent individualized series on basic capitalization and punctuation, arranged in seven booklets from easy levels to advanced levels.

Clark, Charles. *Brainstorming.* New York: Doubleday & Co., 1958.

Group and solo brainstorming techniques are presented. A practical guide with specific suggestions, of ways to generate solutions to problems using formalized brainstorming techniques.

Cowley, Malcolm. *Writers at Work, The Paris Review Interviews.* New York: Viking Press, Inc., and Martin Secker & Warburg, Limited. 1961.

Cummings, Don. "Against a New Ignorance and a New Forgetting." *Washington English Journal,* I, 3, (Spring, 1979), pp. 11-19.

D'Angelo, Frank. *A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric.* Cambridge, Mass: Winthrop, 1975.

"The theory proposed in this book is concerned almost exclusively with the linguistic and rhetorical (or, as I term them, 'conceptual') principles of rhetoric."

Donaldson, Margaret. *Child's Mind.* New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1979.

This book, as the title suggests, deals with the evolving perceptions of a young child's mind and the cognitive stages or levels apparent at certain ages.

Dunning, Stephen. "First House." Puget Sound Writing Program, University of Washington, Seattle, summer, 1980.

Steve Dunning created the "First House" assignment described in this monograph.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing Without Teachers.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

"Free writing" sessions are advocated as a way of generating ideas and finding something to write about.

Farrell, Edmund. "Assessing Writing." *Today's Education,* 20 (February-March, 1981), pp. 46-52.

Farrell surveys various writing assessment tests and notes that "large scale assessment of writing [is] inadequate, costly in both money and time [and] ineffectual in improving instruction." He advocates local assessment which should be far less bureaucratic.

Freedman, Aviva and Pringle, Ian. "Writing in the College Years: Some Indices of Growth." *College Composition and Communication,* XXXI (October, 1980), pp. 311-324.

Research and study of developmental writing abilities has only recently become part of a formalized effort. Much more information will be needed before it is fully understood.

Gere, Anne Ruggles. "Written Composition: Toward a Theory of Evaluation." *College English,* 42 (September, 1980), pp. 44-58.

An excellent article surveying various evaluation systems and ideas and suggesting that a comprehensive theory of evaluation should be established.

Haswell, Richard H. "Tactics of Discourse: A Classification for Student Writers." *College English,* 43 (February, 1981), pp. 168-178.

Haswell expands on Kinneavy's model of discourse, and cites four competencies: understanding, knowing, language sense, and audience as basic classifications or tactics.

Hilts, Philip. "The Clock Within." *Science 80,* Vol. 1, No. 8 (December, 1980), pp. 61-67.

The chemistry and biology of the human body can change so drastically at different times of the day that success in tasks assigned may be as much a matter of chronobiological timing as ability.

Hoffman, E. M. and Schifsky, J. P. "Designing Writing Assignments." *English Journal,* 66 (December, 1977), pp. 41-45.

A good writing assignment should consider such variables as aim, audience, mode, tone, organization, and style.

Johnson, Doris and Myklebust, Helmer R. *Learning Disabilities.* New York: Grune and Stratton, 1971.

An excellent book which describes various learning disabilities in layman's terms. A neurological approach.

Linn, Bill. "Numbers and Angela II." *College English,* 43 (January, 1981), pp. 17-26.

Professor Linn comments on the one year he spent teaching in a South Bronx high school. He returned to the University of Michigan-Dearborne, with much to say about public school education.

Macrorie, Ken. *Telling Writing.* Rochelle Park, New Jersey: Hayden Book Co., 1976.

Honesty, truthtelling, and finding the center of gravity of a piece and one's own center of gravity are some of the most important aspects of writing.

Mandel, Barrett. "The Writer Writing is Not At Home." *College Composition and Communication,* XXXI (December, 1980), pp. 370-377.

This article is concerned with the theory of writing and how many of the ideas of composing do not lend themselves to explanation when the process of composing is closely examined.

Markert, Louise *et al. Individualized Spelling.* Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, Basic Skills Office, 1975.

Osborn, Alex. *Applied Imagination.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.

The principles and procedures of creative thinking applied to the solution of problems common to the business world.

_____. *Wake Up Your Mind.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952.

This book tells what people can do to become more creative. It includes stories and anecdotes about people successful in creative thinking and suggests how the reader can use questions to stimulate solutions to problems.

Ostrom, John. *Better Paragraphs.* New York: Harper & Row, 1978.

A paperback booklet filled with examples of various aspects of paragraphs, i.e: unity, coherence, details, examples, illustrations, etc.

Petite, Joseph. "Johnny: Portrait of a Self-Made Man." *The Educational Forum,* XLV (January, 1981), pp. 179-183.

The remedial student must recognize and accept that it is largely his reluctance to learn, to even try to succeed, that is the cause of much of his failure.

Petrosky, A. R. and Broznick, J. R. "A Model for Teaching Writing Based Upon Current Knowledge of the Composing Process." *English Journal, 68* (January, 1979), pp. 96-101.

A good survey of how many researchers feel about the composing process. A "Model Of The Writing Process" is included with a caution not to overwhelm the student with everything all at once. "The central idea is to keep the writers moving toward more sophisticated writing in the most unobtrusive way possible—through the use of conferences."

Restak, Richard. *The Brain.* New York: Doubleday, 1979.

Recent studies indicate that many of the differences between brain functions of men and women are biologically determined, innate, and are not fundamentally changed by the impact of environment. The behavior of men and women cannot be explained by cultural influences upon them while growing up.

Roberts, Julian and Andreach, James. *Comp-Pac.* New York: Walker Educational Book Corp., 1966.

An expository writing program with transparencies and ditto sheets. Main sections of the expository format are displayed, including introductions, topic sentences, paragraph development, supporting detail, and conclusions.

Sabol, Jim. "Teaching Kids to Write Right." English 5239. August, 1979, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, Washington.

Jim conducts workshops around the country on methods used for composition teaching. Several of the ideas in this monograph were suggested by him.

Sale, Roger. *On Writing.* New York: Random House, 1970.

Writing cannot be taught, but through close analysis of student writing, appropriate suggestions can be made to help students develop their own style.

Slingerland, Beth. *Specific Language Disability Children.* Cambridge, Mass: Educators Publishing Service, Inc., 1971.

An excellent text on multi-sensory instruction.

Spalding, Romalda and Spalding, Walter. *The Writing Road to Reading.* New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1969.

Words are taught in spelling lessons in the order of frequency of use in the language, and the important rules of spelling are taught by examples when they are met in the words being studied.

Stanford, Gene and Smith, Maria. *A Guidebook for Teaching Composition.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1978.

This book contains many practical exercises on many aspects of composition.

Taylor, Stanford, *et al. Controlled Reading Study Guide.* New York: Educational Developmental Laboratories, Inc., 1963.

This series is designed to be used with a controlled reader machine. However, the stories can be read for profit and information without the machine. Very good for high school-level interests.

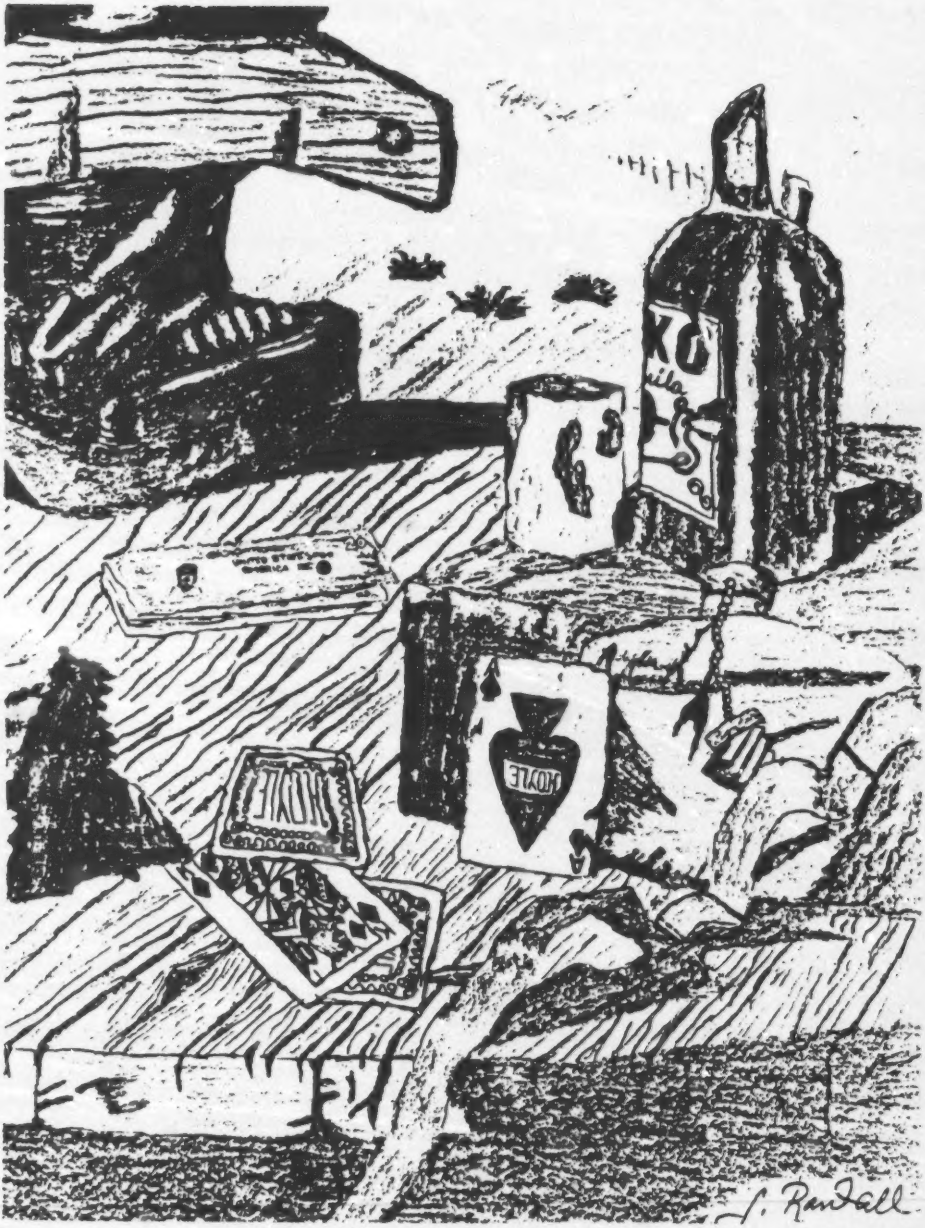
Wallace, Graham. *The Art of Thought.* New York: Harcourt, Brace Javonovich, 1926.

We Teach Handwriting. Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, 1963.

Wilson, Robert N. "Poetic Creativity, Process and Personality." *Psychiatry,* 17 (1954), pp. 163-176.

Wresch, William. "What Help Can We Expect From Reading Teachers?" *College English,* 43 (January, 1981), pp. 69-71.

Wresch points out the many areas where reading teachers can help composition teachers, and suggests that this resource is not utilized nearly enough.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Ray Marik received a B.A. degree from the University of Washington and an M. Ed. with an administrative credential from Seattle University. He is currently Special Education Department Head at Ingraham High School in Seattle, Washington, and is also a technical writing instructor in the Shoreline Community College evening program. In 1974 he was a Fulbright teacher in England, and has been on special assignment from the Seattle district to the U.S. Government as a Job Corps Teacher on Project Interchange. He participated in the first NEH Puget Sound Writing Program at the University of Washington in 1978, and in 1981 attended the follow-on, Writing in the Humanities Project. He is a contributing author to a forthcoming text, *Writing to Learn in the Secondary School,* a Puget Sound Writing Program project. He recently returned from a NSF grant on Science For The Handicapped at Washington State University and will be working on interdisciplinary writing in science and language arts.

Ray has had many interests. He has sailed American, Canadian, and Alaskan coastal waters as deck hand, navigator, and engineer aboard both private yachts and fishing barges. He was a paratrooper in the elite black beret Rangers; has worked in the construction industry building houses; invented a product, formed a corporation and successfully sold the product at the Seattle World's Fair; formed an aircharter service and flew the West Coast from California to Alaska; worked for seven years in aerospace guided missiles as a technical writer. Currently, he serves as a member of a corporate board of trustees. He writes and publishes poetry, and is working on a grant to obtain word processors to research to what extent this technology will help special education students (especially in the revising stages) learn to write better essays.